MEMORY LANE

A Photographic Album of Daily Life in Britain

1930-1953

Introduced by

JAMES CAMERON

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1930-1953

Introduced by James Cameron

Photographic research by Harold Chapman
Captions by Joanna Smith

J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd
London, Melbourne and Toronto

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This book is set in VIP Gill Medium by
D. P. Media Limited, Hitchin, Hertfordshire

Printed in Great Britain by
BAS Printers, Stockbridge, Hants for
J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd
Aldine House, 33 Welbeck Street, London

First published in hardback, 1980
Reprinted in hardback and paperback, 1981
Reprinted in paperback, 1983, 1985

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

Memory lane.
1. Great Britain – Social life and customs – 20th century – Pictorial works
I. Title
941·083'022'2 DA566·4

ISBN 0-460-04457-5

Pbk ISBN 0-460-02230 X

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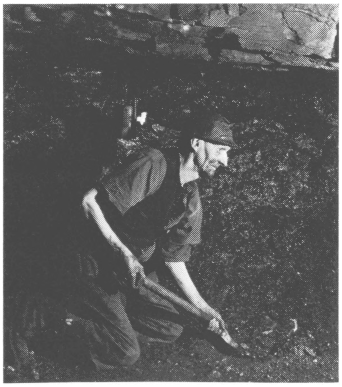
INTRODUCTION



It is difficult today to think of anyone feeling warmly nostalgic about the 1930s. Some may, but for their own and not history's reasons. It was a bleak and cheerless decade on the whole, and those who remember it – unless they were rich or royal or reckless – do so with the regret that is tempered by time. It took a second World War to bring the grey 1930s to an end; it is a measure of the period that even this seemed – for a moment – a relief.

This is a backhanded way of insisting that an anthology of pictures of the time is uncommonly valuable and important – either as a visual nudge to the memory, or possibly a revelation of how surprisingly prehistoric we seem to have been only a generation ago, in the lifetime of millions of us. Hunger-marchers in 1932 protesting against the Means Test! What on earth was the Means Test? It argued that if an out-of-work family had been provident and diligent enough to have saved up a few quid in better days their dole was harshly cut pro rata. Hospitals existed through charities and flag-days. Pit-workers in privately-owned coal-mines lived like slaves. Barrel-organs – who today has ever seen or heard a barrel-organ, outside the television archives? Splendid steam traction-engines, now to be seen only in museums or at sentimental old crock reunions. All so long ago and far away removed from our contemporary anxieties, this record could seem almost Dickensian, except that to anyone of moderate middle-age they were part of a present and enduring life.

The precursor to this book was called *The Day Before Yesterday*, a photographic album of Victorian and Edwardian Britain, and it was introduced by Peter Quennell. I argue that he had an easier job than mine. His raw material was the hitherto undiscovered country of photography itself, the virgin art of Fox Talbot and Louis Daguerre and Octavius Hill and Francis Frith, and the total novelty and excitement of this pioneering medium made it a revelation.

These old founding fathers had no peers, no criteria; what they made they had created – or, one might technically say, developed. They were essentially craftsmen and artists, and their work was to be wondered at, and even in its infancy to be treasured, because it had never happened before.

Fame was not so easy for their successors. A couple of generations later the medium had become no longer surprising; we were into the age of the amateur snapshot and the diligent newsman; such pictures were no longer for connoisseurs or archivists, and we no longer stood in wonder that people could make photographs at all. By then – and by now – photographs were no longer art, they were communication.

Paradoxically these pictures of the 1930s and 1940s communicate much more to us now than they did then. There could have been nothing particularly novel to the Londoners of the thirties about Covent Garden porters carrying pillars of baskets on their heads; today it would be as odd as seeing the nobs borne around in sedan-chairs. Where have the travelling tinkers gone, and the charcoal-burners? It is not as though we were thinking about flint-knappers or water-diviners or alchemists; these trades and crafts were a normal and accepted part of life a mere forty or so years ago, which makes it all the stranger that in this short span they have already become history.

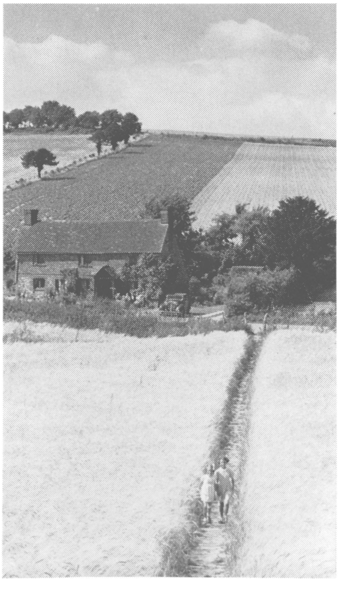
These pictures of the 1930s and 1940s are rarely distinguished; photography had outpaced the studied soft-focus exposures of the nineteenth century, and photo-journalism was only reaching for the excitement and immediacy it was soon to develop with the memorable *Picture Post* and *Life* magazines. These media, after all, had not yet been born, and the equipment was by our standards slow and square. Even so, often the naiveté and the seemingly casual approach is deeply telling and revealing; it was not always art, but my goodness it was life.

A Britain of the 1980s, mesmerized by contemporary prophecies of impending doom, rarely remembers that it has all been done before. In 1933 there were in the country three million people out of work – a far higher proportion of the population than is the case now. In the United States the *leitmotif* was 'Brother Can You Spare A Dime', and the rhythmic thud on the sidewalk of ruined brokers plunging from Wall Street windows. Most people thought the game was up, and indeed it nearly was. That was some fifty years ago, when you and I were young, laddie.

At least I was, living and working in Dundee, where the staple industry, jute, had collapsed, and where the favourite picture-postcard was an ironic panorama of idle smokeless factory chimneys, captioned 'Bonny Dundee'. As a four pound a week local reporter I was, it seemed, among the well-to-do. If material conditions of life meant anything I was working class, since I worked very hard for little pay, but it did not give me entrance to the confidence of true workers – at least not then – because I was not on the dole. This is precisely the limbo situation which this random anthology of 1930s photographs so memorably encapsulates.

I go on arbitrarily about Dundee, because to me that was the 1930s; 'Jarrow' would be a more evocative word for the period, but there was in fact little difference. I lived in a community of seventy thousand, with some forty thousand of them unemployed. Paradoxically I can find the place represented but once in this collection of pictures – who in the thirties would trouble to photograph an industrial graveyard? – but it was a place of searing ugliness set on a hill and a firth like the Bay of Naples.

This sort of contrast pervaded the Dundee of the 1930s – and many another such stricken town, as the various sections of *Memory Lane* make very clear. It was not only visual, it was social: the opulence of the mill-owners in our suburb of Broughty Ferry, the despairing hovels of our Hilltown slums. I was young and inexperienced, all I could grasp was that this sort of society was wrong, even unnatural, though none of us knew how on earth to oppose it. Political thinking came much later to my generation, though it hummed and throbbed around us the whole time.



It is hard to remember, looking at these scenes of an England inimitably insular both in its back streets and its comfortable country homes, that this in the thirties was a nation on the edge of a continent sliding fast into fascism. In this decade Mussolini and Salazar were joined by Hitler and Franco in an apparently irresistible growth of totalitarianism. Austria and Czechoslovakia vanished into the Third Reich, the Spanish Republic disappeared.

All this has relevance to those who remember the age, however vaguely; it has curiously little to the images in this picture-book – except as a haunting background to every one of them. One would not immediately think that with hindsight so many analysts called the 1930s and early 1940s the Red Decade. It is true that the Communist Party had a membership of 2,500 in 1930, and 17,500 by 1939, and 56,000 by 1942. It was the decade when Victor Gollancz's Left Book Club grew to 58,000 strong. Yet all this was symbolic somehow of despair rather than militant anger; there was little one could do politically, so one joined things, as a gesture of refusal rather than hope. After the disastrous General Strike of 1926 a million trades unionists defected; the Labour Party was deep in the doldrums; after Ramsay MacDonald's sell-out in 1931 it was out of office for the rest of the decade. So one ran about making defiant and wholly useless gestures of solidarity with acceptable people like the Spanish Republicans, the German Jews, and – until the astonishing Hitler-Stalin Pact caught everyone on one foot – the Soviet union.

Although this book is, and very properly, concerned with the small events within our own country – this is in fact its direct and engaging appeal, since these pictures were not taken with posterity in mind – all this domestic trivia must be seen against the background of what Winston Churchill called The Gathering Storm, the not-so-gradual advance of sinister things beyond the frontiers of our insular certainties. The vernal simplicities of these impromptu moments in time – like the touching glimpse of the Maundy Charity in rural Kent – are almost all unrepeatable; already they were vanishing fast, and with absolute certainty will never return.

The great punctuation-mark – certainly of the two decades, possibly of the century – was World War Two, in its way very nearly as dire an illustration of human imbecility as World War One. There is nothing I can say about the Home-Front War that has not been said a thousand times before, and is in any case far better said by these pictures. Its climax, the catastrophic horror of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, made it instantly clear in one thirty-thousandth of a second that scenes like these of the London blitz can never recur in whatever coming Storm the future is Gathering now. Sandbags, barrage balloons, Civil Defence, blackouts – they will all be as useful as the broadsword and buckler against the big bang. I say this with some feeling, since I am one of the very few people who has seen three atom-bombs go off and lived to tell the tale – interminably, I am afraid.

I was called up at the beginning of the War and almost at once kicked out. The army doctors could see no use for me, and enjoined me strictly never again to go above three thousand feet and in no circumstances to have anything to do with the military. Thenceforth I spent years flying at about twenty thousand feet and wearing the uniforms of four armies and navies of different countries in my crazy capacity as war correspondent, an enlightening but not especially ennobling experience.

The wartime photographers were braver than we were. A reporter can fudge his story from other people's stories, a photographer to get his picture has to stand up and be counted, and occasionally killed. He was frequently crippled by a punitive censorship, but he got his prints. Yet the photographers of that time had not yet come to formalize grief, or even, as we did later, to give visual drama to sorrow; there are few pictures of the sort of dramatic despair that we were – and alas are – used to from South East Asia, from Korea, Viet Nam, Kampuchea. I am pretty sure I am right in saying that the 1940s' cameramen were not studied propagandists, as they later became, despite themselves. The technical wheel came full circle, oddly enough. The great men of the nineteenth century were stars by virtue of their own creation – Fox Talbot and Daguerre and Hill and the rest of the innovators. Almost a century had to pass before the craft produced a new and different race of photographic stars – Robert Capa, Don McCullin, Cartier Bresson, Bert Hardy, and countless more – who exploited the creation of the old masters into a new invention of poignant immediacy through their courage, diligence and invention in times of war and torment. Without them, and their colleagues behind the TV movie-cameras, bringing tragedy into everyone's living-room, it is not impossible that Viet Nam would still be going on.

Our present book belongs to neither era, but the lull between. The old masters had come and gone, the new cowboys had yet to arrive on the scene. The age of the gracefully studied Victorian compositions had receded and not yet given place to the swift clip of the firing-squad. What we have here is the essentially persuasive drama of the commonplace – or what passed for the commonplace in our youth. In its way it is far more evocative. None of us were there when my ancestress Julia Margaret took her painstakingly long exposures of Victorian notables; few of us were around when Buddhist monks were burning themselves to death in Saigon. But a lot of us were there when the luckless Edward VIII abdicated the throne of England for the sake of an American divorcee, when water came from wells, when street buskers and musicians had not been conquered by the relentless numbing three-chord thud of the tedious pop guitar. A lot of us still remember pawnshops and public wash-houses, and though fewer of us remember personal gamekeepers and foxhunting we were still around in their time.

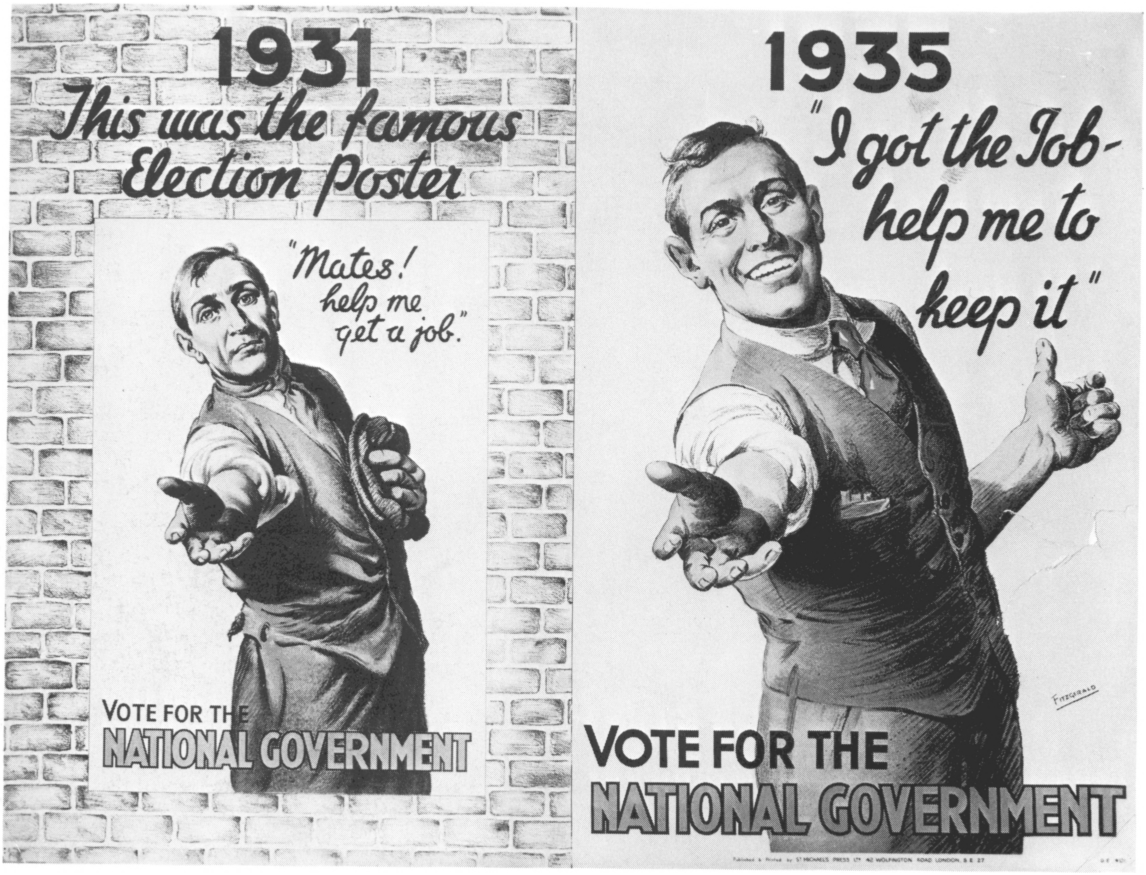
These pictures of the 1930s and 1940s abound in ironies that are not, because they could not possibly be, intentional. A post-war Austin factory where all the cars went for export. A Morris Cowley production line with a target of 2,500 vehicles a week. Steel production entirely in private ownership until it was nationalized in 1950, in the face of fierce opposition from the Tories and the House of Lords. The now-banned herring fetching three pounds a cran in Shetland. Bread, never rationed during the war, rationed in peace. Queues for meat, petrol, vegetables, nylons, newspapers. Windmill Girls and Tommy Handley. Seven-inch television sets for a handful of licence holders to watch Philip Harben showing how to cook foods that nobody had. Gertrude Lawrence. Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers. Schiaparelli and Coco Chanel. The Lambeth Walk. Aneurin Bevan and the National Health. Read all about it. Or rather look at it, and pretend you don't remember.

The Thirties

WORKING

WANTED
WORK
CARPENTRY
GARDENING

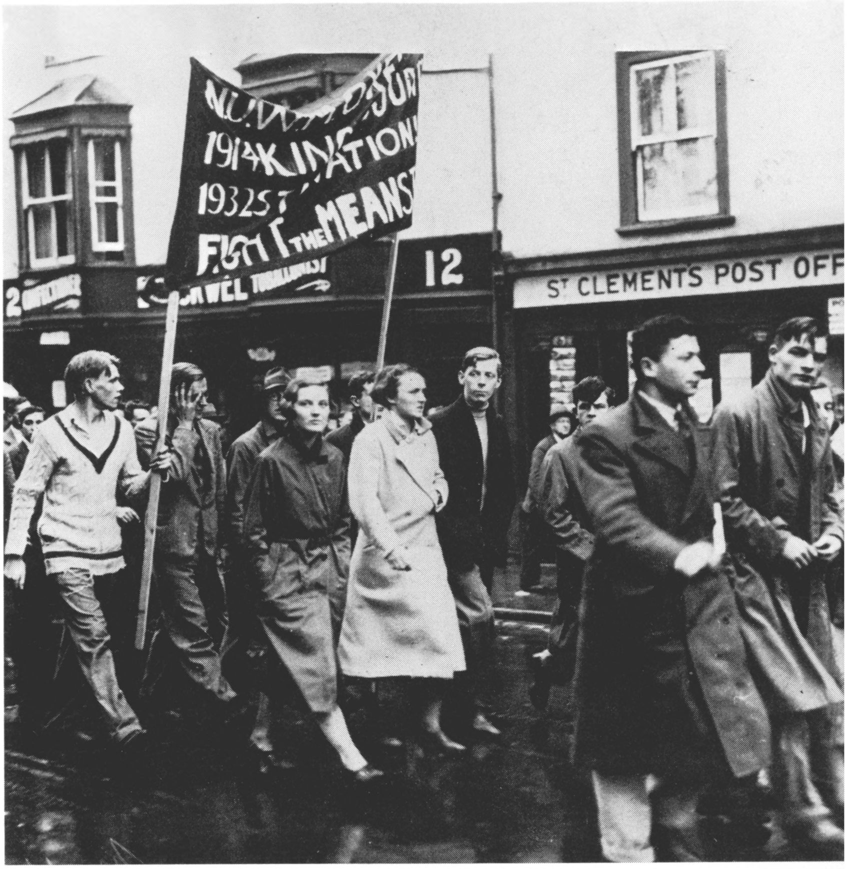
1
Unemployment reached its peak in January 1933, with just under three million out of work.


1931
This was the famous Election Poster
"Mates! help me get a job."
VOTE FOR THE
NATIONAL GOVERNMENT
1935
"I got the Job - help me to keep it"
FITZGERALD
VOTE FOR THE
NATIONAL GOVERNMENT
Published & Printed by ST. MICHAELS PRESS LTD 42 WOLFINGTON ROAD LONDON S.E. 27

2
The National Government, a coalition of Conservatives, Liberals, and a handful of Labour MPs, took over from Labour in 1931 under the Labour leader Ramsay MacDonald. It was confirmed in office by the election of 1931 and survived the Depression. In 1935 MacDonald resigned and Stanley Baldwin took over the increasingly Conservative coalition. Despite the boast of the 1935 election poster, the economic revival owed little to Government policies; the fact was that world prices were running in Britain's favour.

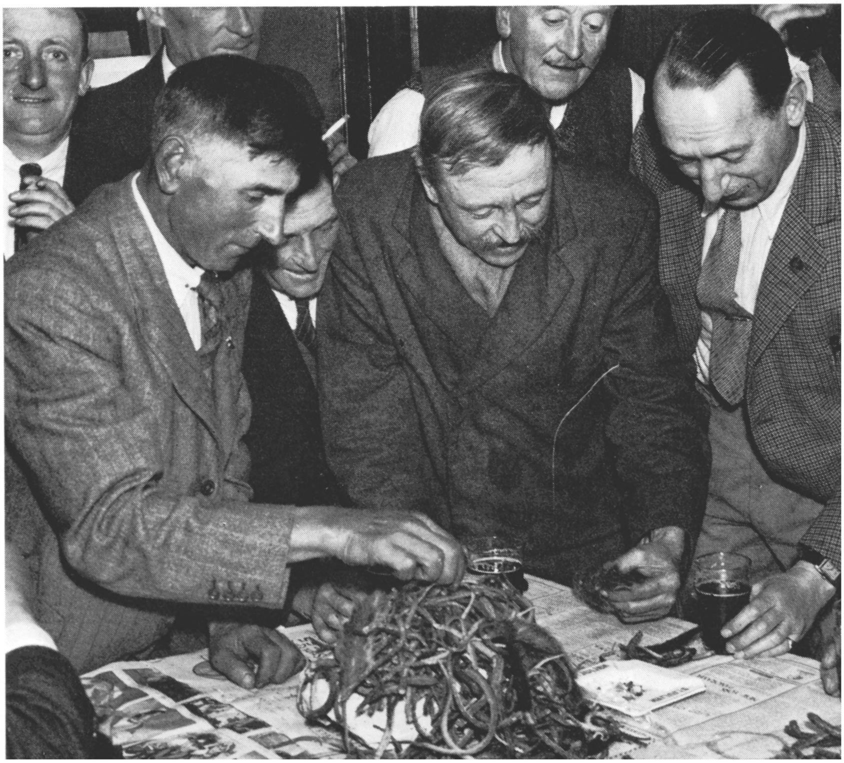
► **3**

Oxford undergraduates with the Lancashire contingent of hunger marchers, protesting against the means test in 1932. Government spending cuts in 1931 included the much-resented means test for those on the dole. Savings and earnings by all members of the family were taken into account and thus hard-working, provident families were penalized.



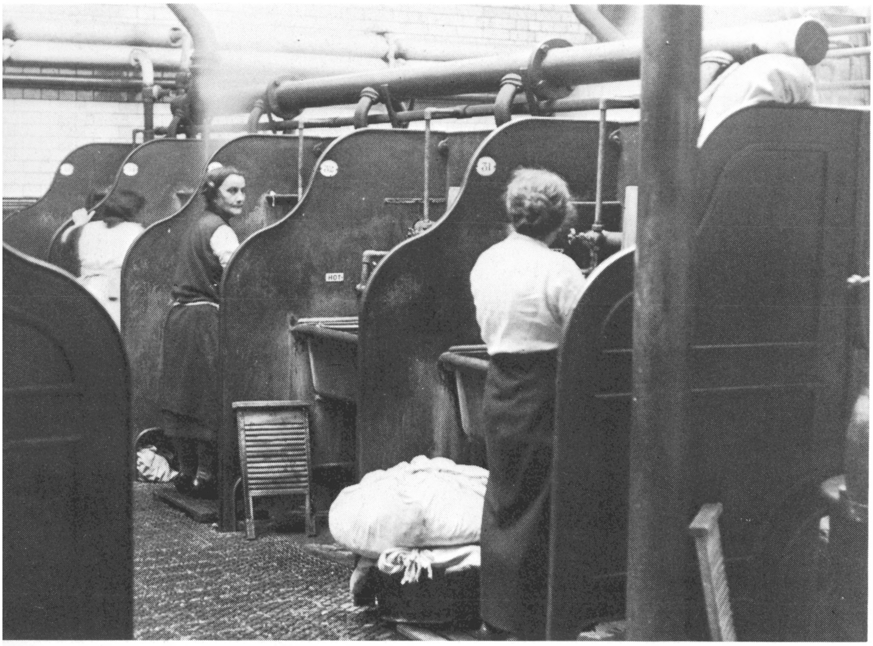
► **4**

The Rat and Sparrow Club at Eynsford in Kent, 1939. These clubs, usually paid for by local farmers and based in pubs, gave an opportunity to collect extra cash in convivial surroundings, even if this method of paying for keeping down vermin may appear somewhat barbaric. Members were paid according to the number of vermin tails brought in.



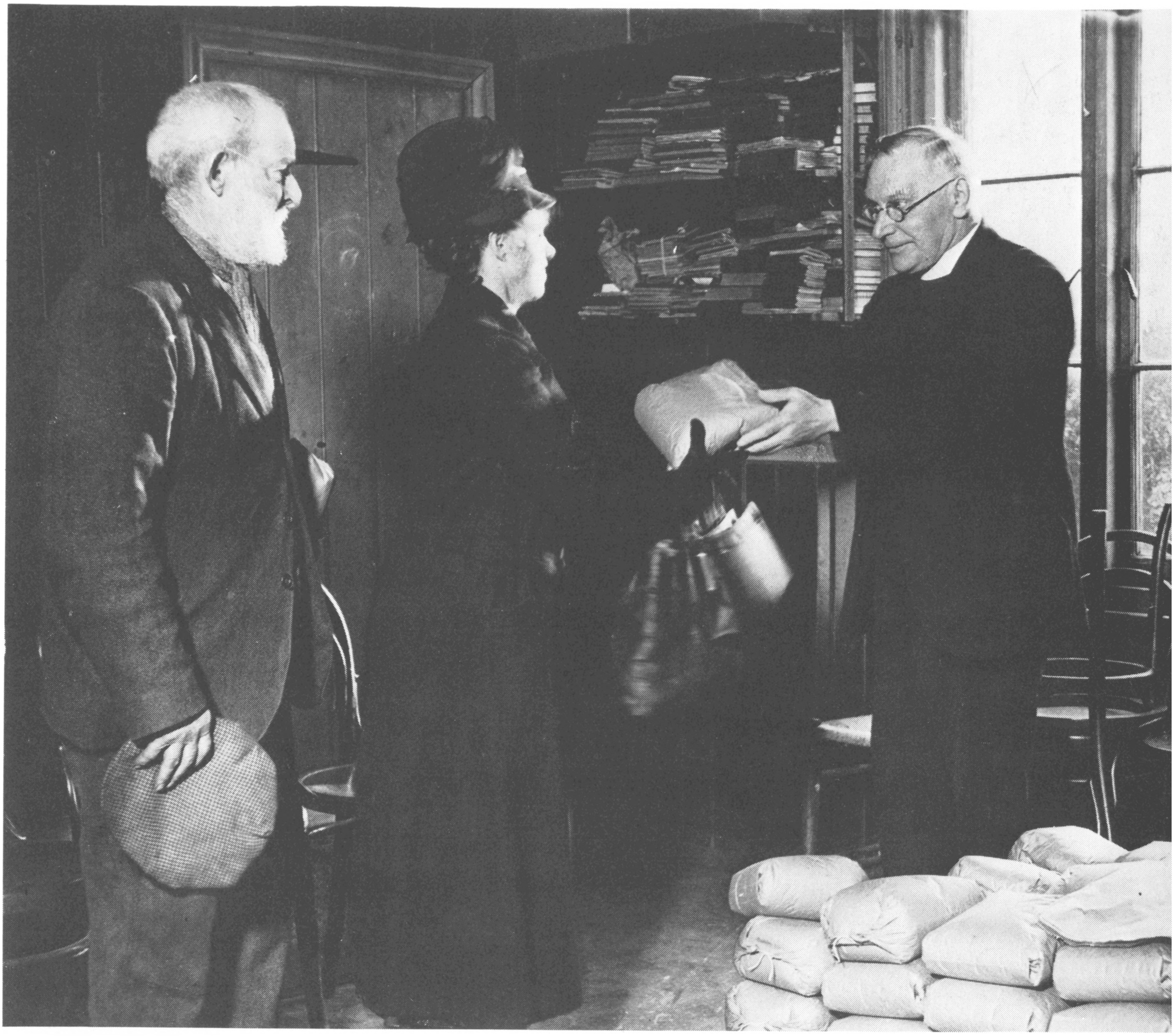
▲ 5
The old suffered much from the Depression and their pensions were too small to allow for an adequate diet. Farnborough provided its old men with a Christmas dinner in 1937.

► 6
Girls in this Birmingham school were taught to cope with washday.



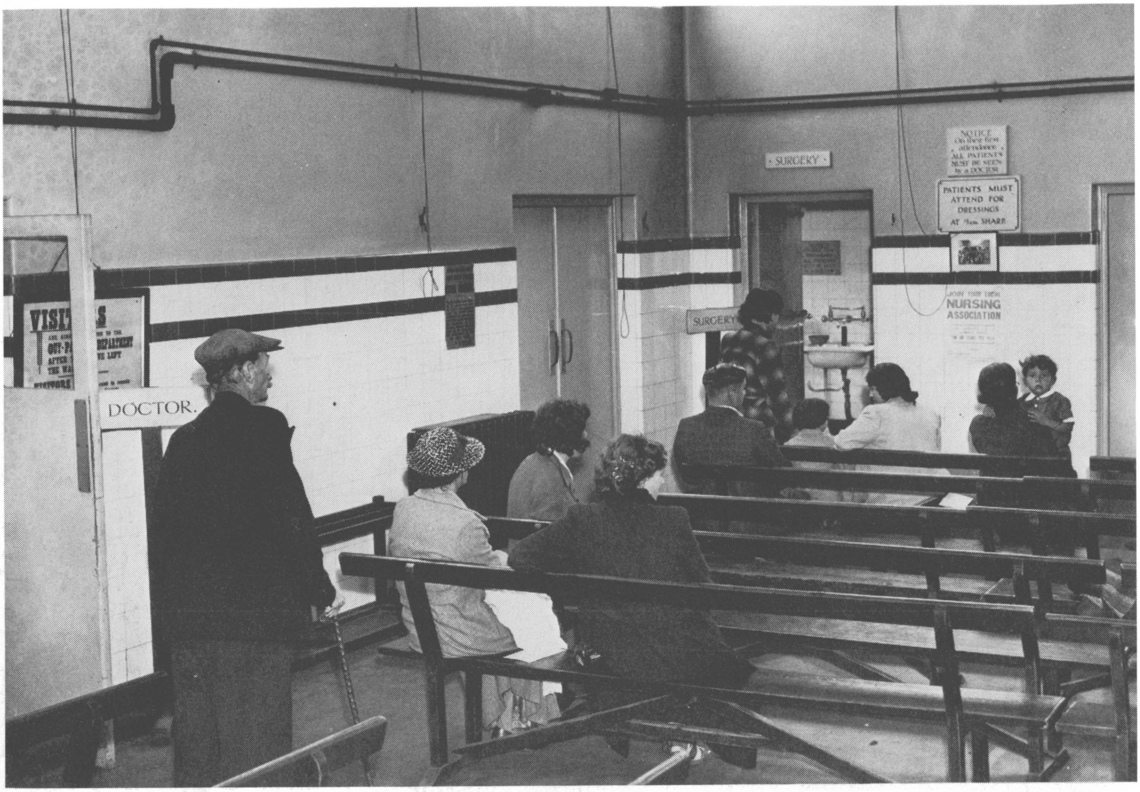
▲ 7
A public wash-house in 1934. Each cubicle was provided with hot water (it was unusual at this time for working-class homes to have an indoor water supply) and a scrubbing board on which the clothes were rubbed to get rid of the dirt.

▶ 8
Monday morning at a pawnshop in the East End of London. The women waited for the pawnshop to open; all their money had been spent on Saturday and bundles of clothes were pawned on Mondays to be redeemed at the end of the week if cash allowed. In one survey it was found that one family in three used a pawnbroker.

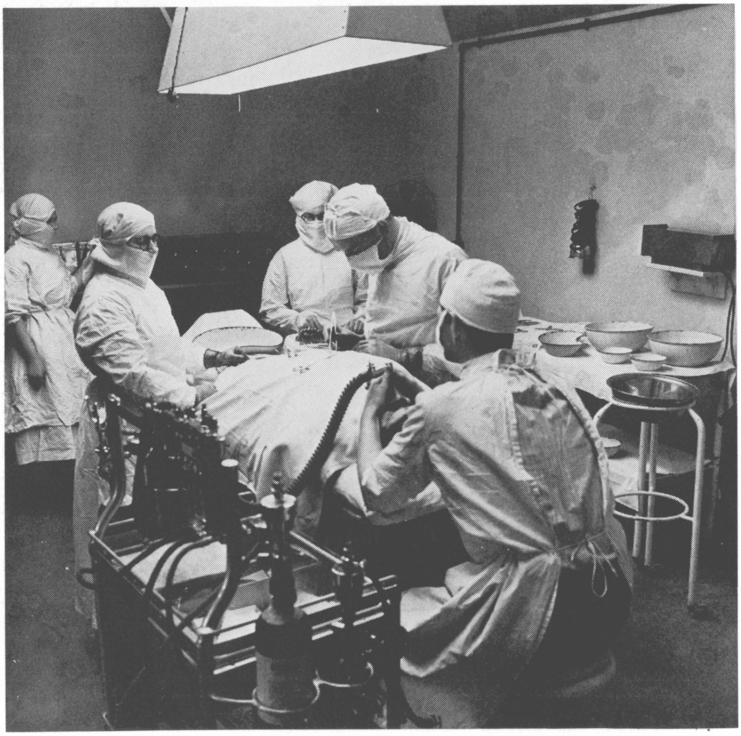


9

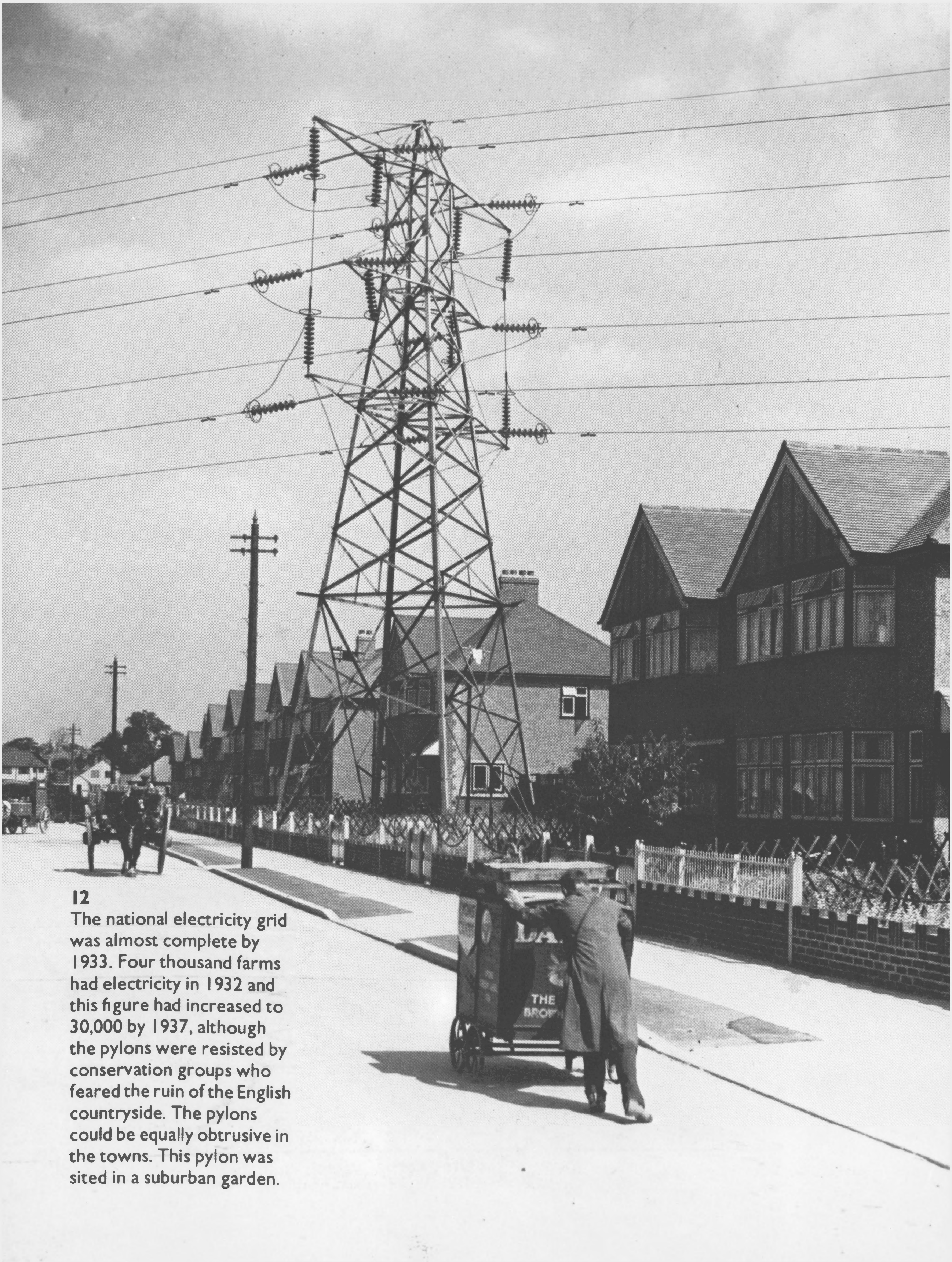
Cap in hand, a villager waits to receive Maundy peas at Sutton-at-Hone, Kent, 1933. This charity dated back to 1572: twenty bushels of peas and two bushels of wheat were given to the poor of the parish every Maundy Thursday.


SURGERY
PATIENTS MUST ATTEND FOR DRESSINGS AT 9am SHARP
NURSING ASSOCIATION
SURGERY
VISITORS
DOCTOR.

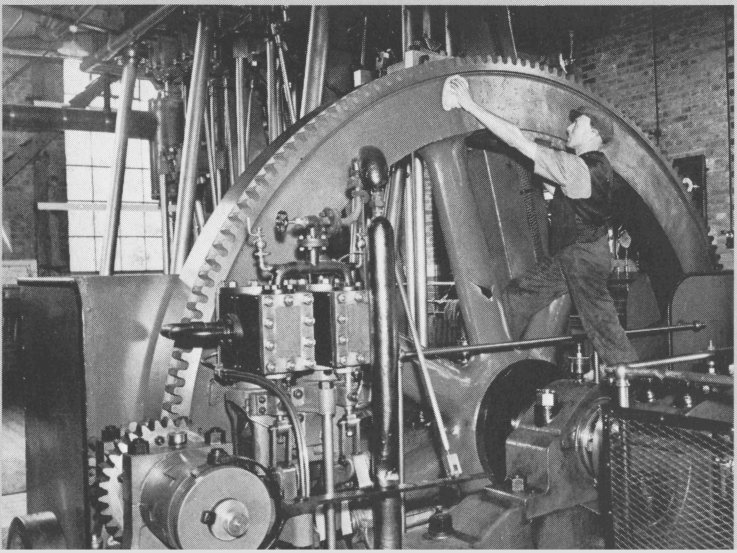
▲ **10**
Outpatients Department at Gravesend Hospital, 1939. Only wage-earners were covered by National Insurance; local authorities and voluntary organizations contributed to the cost of medical treatment for those in need. Most hospitals were run by voluntary organizations; money was raised by bazaars, flag days and subscriptions.



► **11**
An operation in progress, 1939.



12
The national electricity grid was almost complete by 1933. Four thousand farms had electricity in 1932 and this figure had increased to 30,000 by 1937, although the pylons were resisted by conservation groups who feared the ruin of the English countryside. The pylons could be equally obtrusive in the towns. This pylon was sited in a suburban garden.

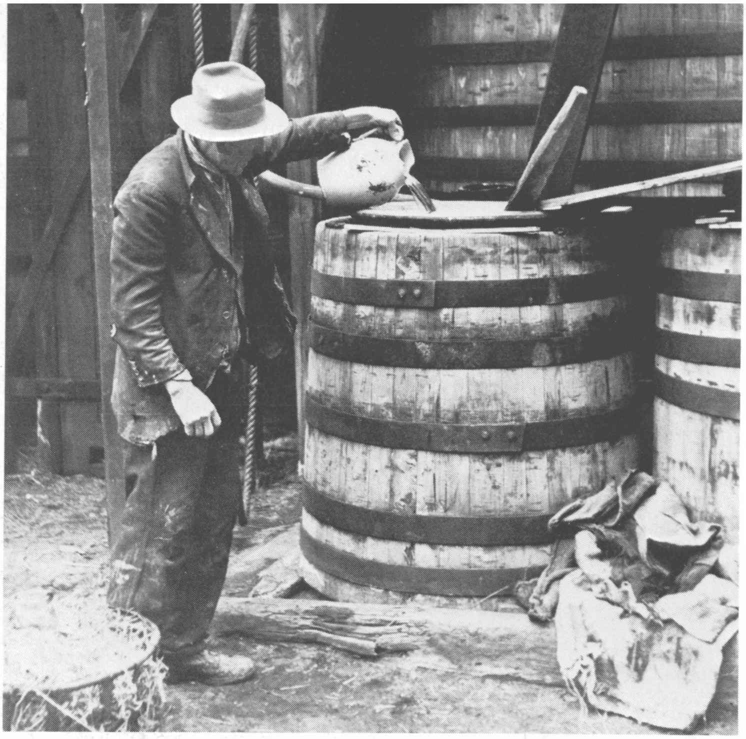


◀ **13**
Electricity was a boon to the housewife who could afford this electric washing machine.

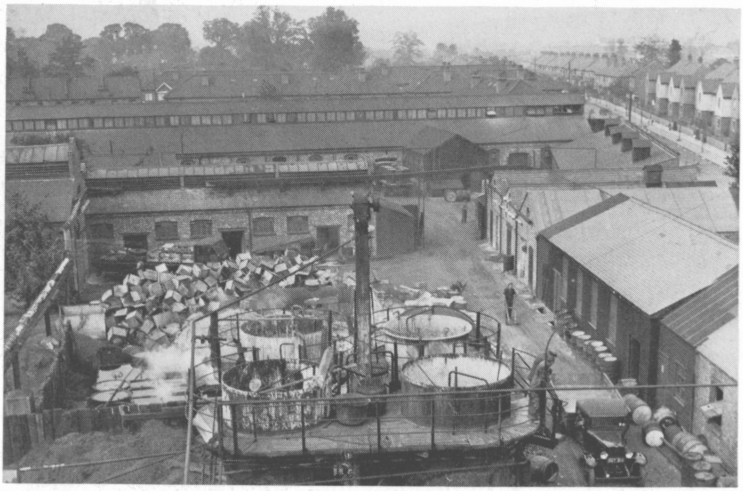
◀ **14**
Magnificent machinery at a waterworks in 1939; but many households in towns and entire rural communities were still without mains water.

▶ **15**
The gas cleaner, Gravesend Gas-works.

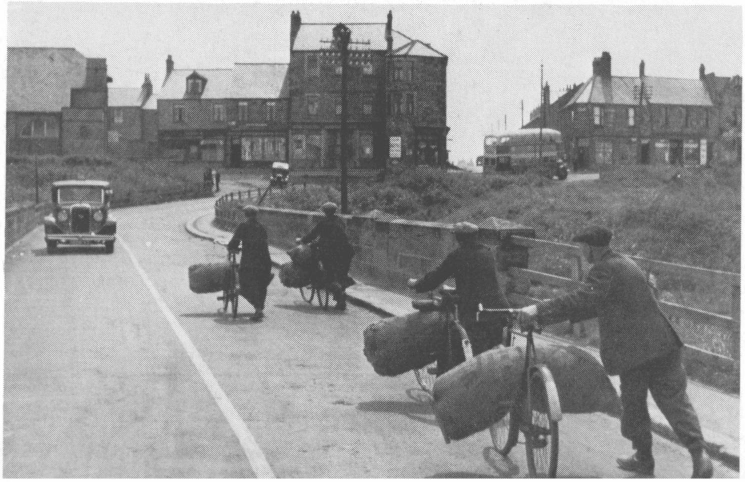
KP 115



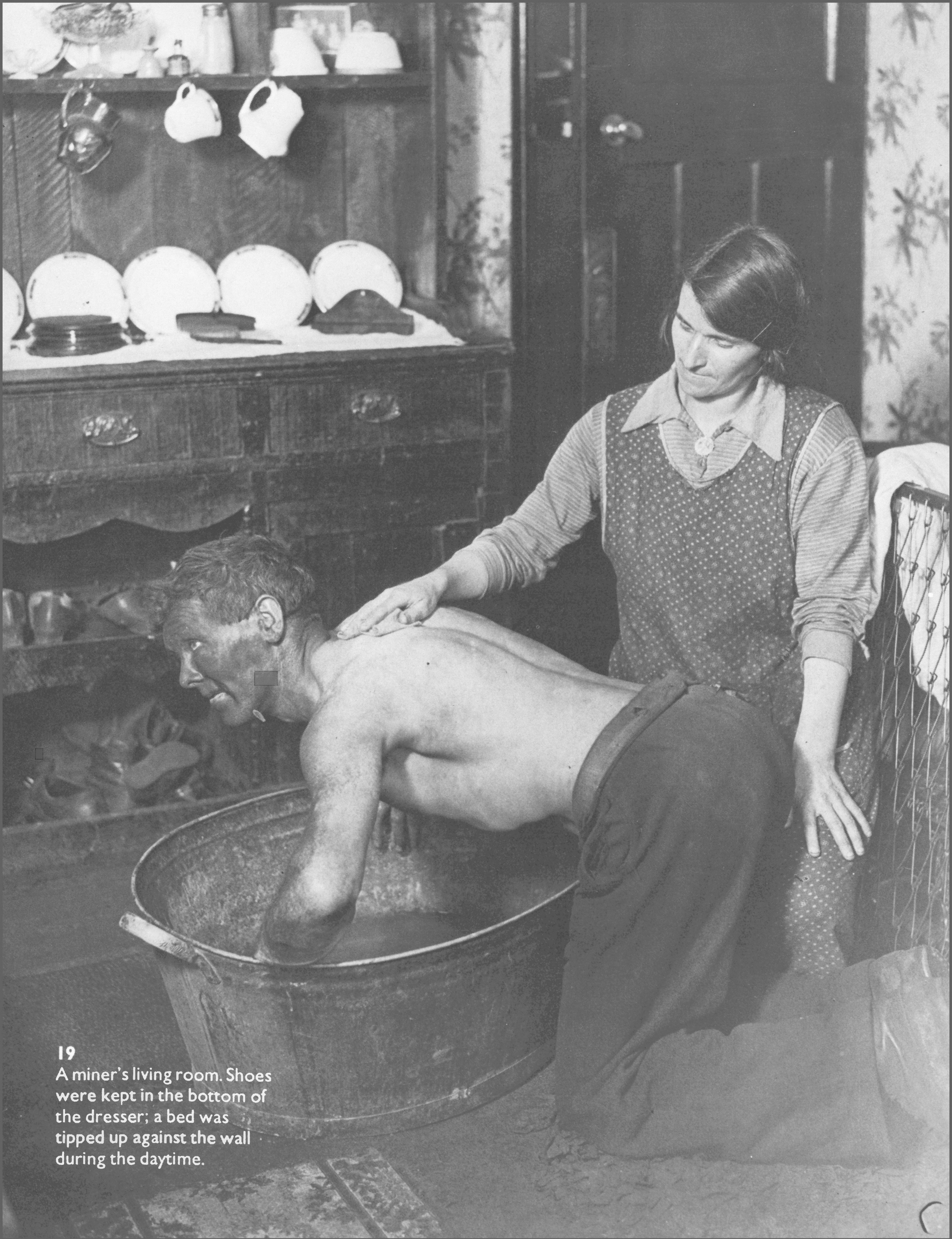
◀ **16**
Manufacturing methods were frequently primitive. Here a worker pours sulphuric acid onto cadmium bars at the Tyke and Kings Chemical Works, 1936.



◀ **17**
A general view of the chemical works.

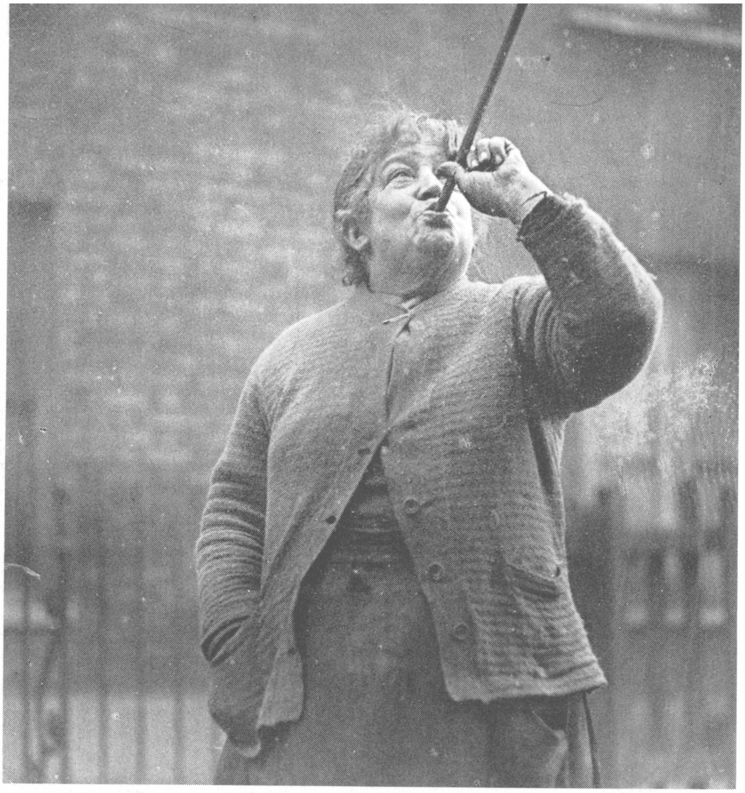


◀ **18**
The coal miners were hard hit by the Depression. Many mines closed and others worked irregularly; the work was hard and conditions often appalling. These miners are taking coal home on their bicycles, 1936.



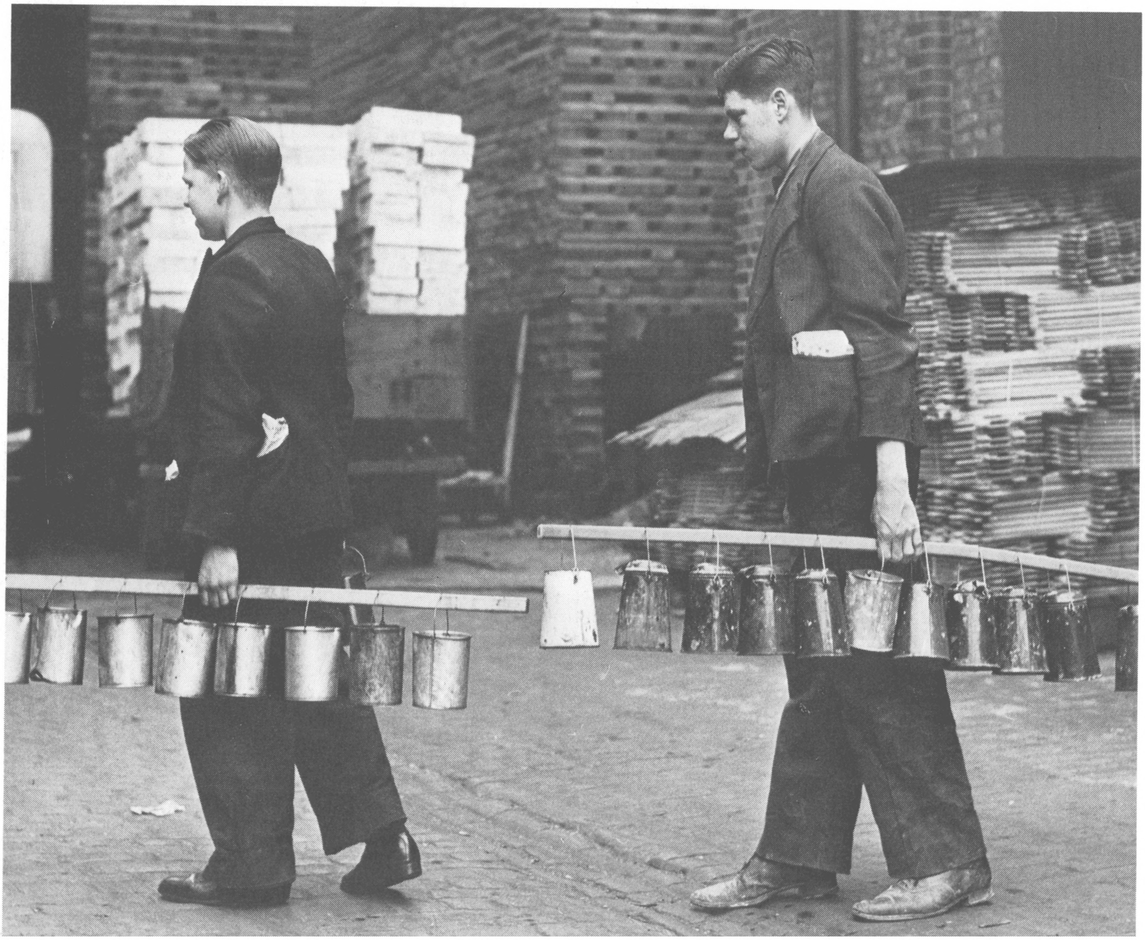
19

A miner's living room. Shoes were kept in the bottom of the dresser; a bed was tipped up against the wall during the daytime.

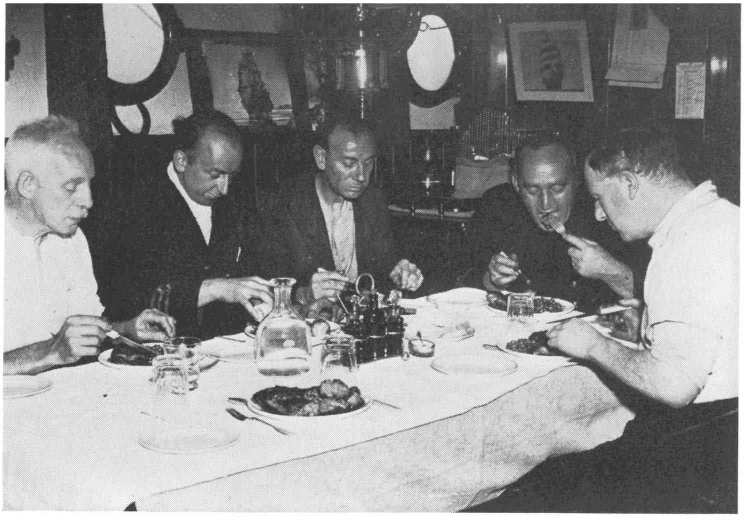


◀ **20**
Few workers possessed alarm clocks, so the services of this 'knocker up' were in demand. She woke her clients by shooting peas at their windows.

▼ **21**
Factory tea boys, 1938.



► 22
A job at sea had its attractions. This was the captain's table aboard a tramp steamer in 1936.



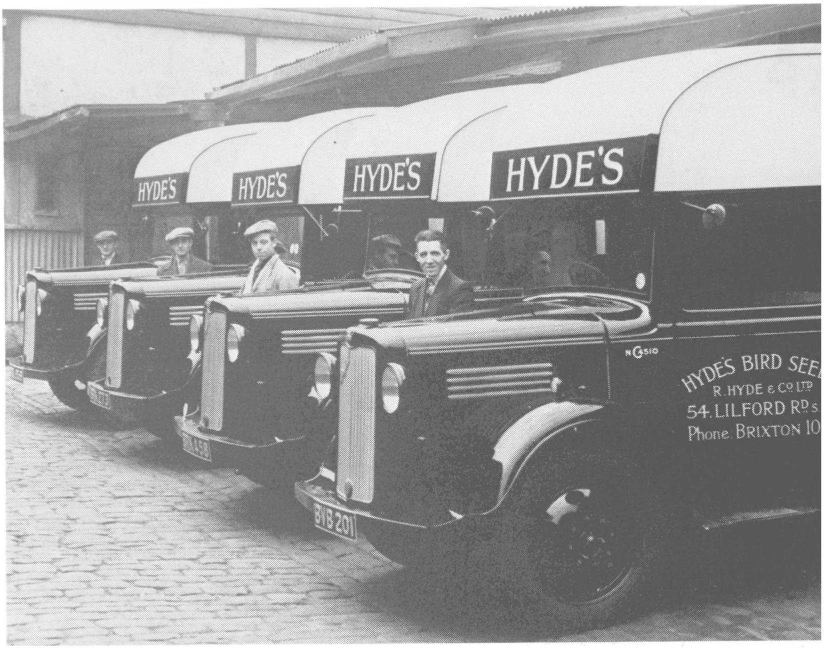
▼ 23
Tea break on a shrimping boat, 1936.

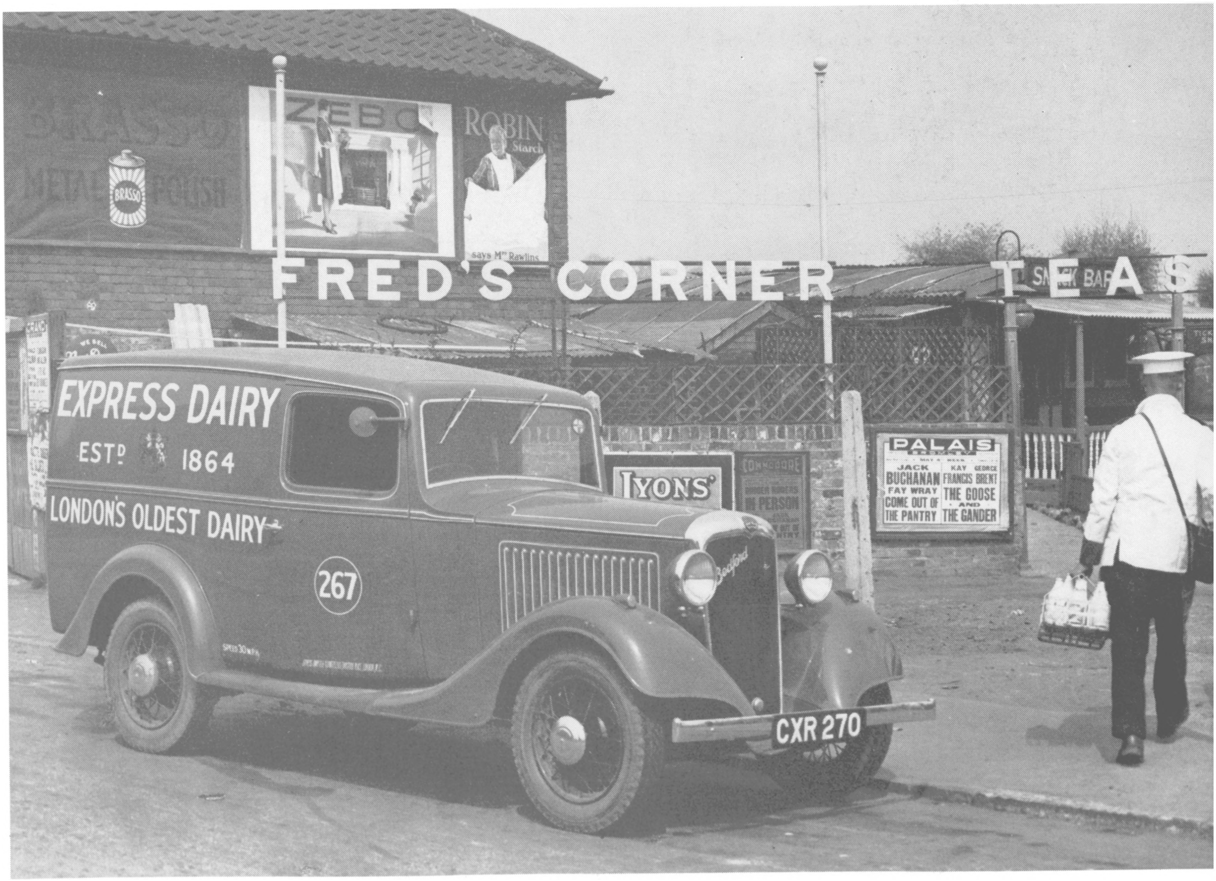
OXO CUBE
Beechams Powders
EARLY CLOSING DAY THURSDAY
FOR HEALTH PROTECTION USE LIFEBUOY SOAP
KORAY
FREEDOM
SYLVAN
SYLVAN FLAKES
TASTE
CIGARETTES

◀ **24**
Most homes were still heated by a single coal fire in the living room and deliveries of coal were a common sight. The coal was often tipped through a hole or down a chute into a coal store in the basement, as in this photograph.

▶ **25**
Van drivers.

▼ **26**
A milkman and his Bedford van.


HYDE'S
HYDE'S
HYDE'S
HYDE'S
HYDE'S BIRD SEE
R. HYDE & Co LTD
54. LILFORD RD S
Phone. BRIXTON 10
BYB 201


BRASSO
METAL POLISH
ZEBO
ROBIN Starch
says Mrs Rawlins
FRED'S CORNER
TEAS
SNACK BAR
EXPRESS DAIRY
ESTD 1864
LONDON'S OLDEST DAIRY
267
Bedford
CXR 270
LYONS'
PALAIS
JACK BUCHANAN
FAY WRAY
COME OUT OF THE PANTRY
KAY FRANCIS
GEORGE BRENT
THE GOOSE AND THE GANDER

FISHING &
BASS FROM THE WOOD
JJ 9581

W. ATKIN.
AMF 658

◀ **27**
Horses and lorries in Billingsgate market.

◀ **28**
Covent Garden porters still used their traditional baskets.

▶ **29**
'Any old Rags and Bones?'

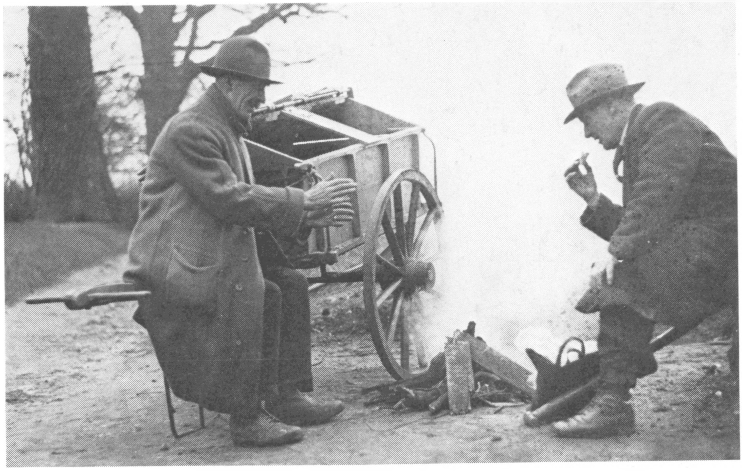
▶ **30**
Street traders abounded. The ice cream trade was run largely by Italians.

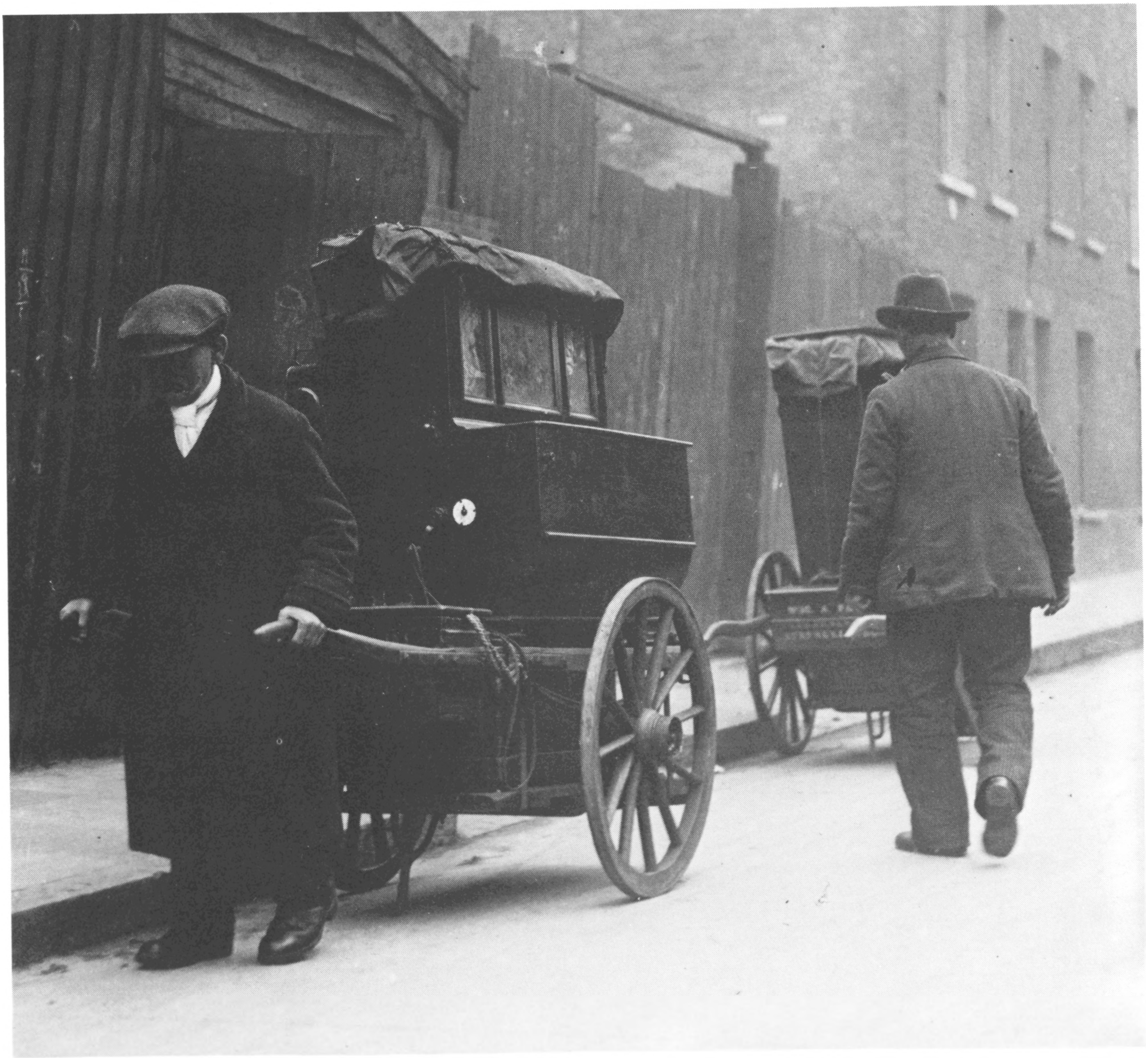
ICE BISCUITS
L. PAPA & SON'S
DIPLOMA ICE CREAM.

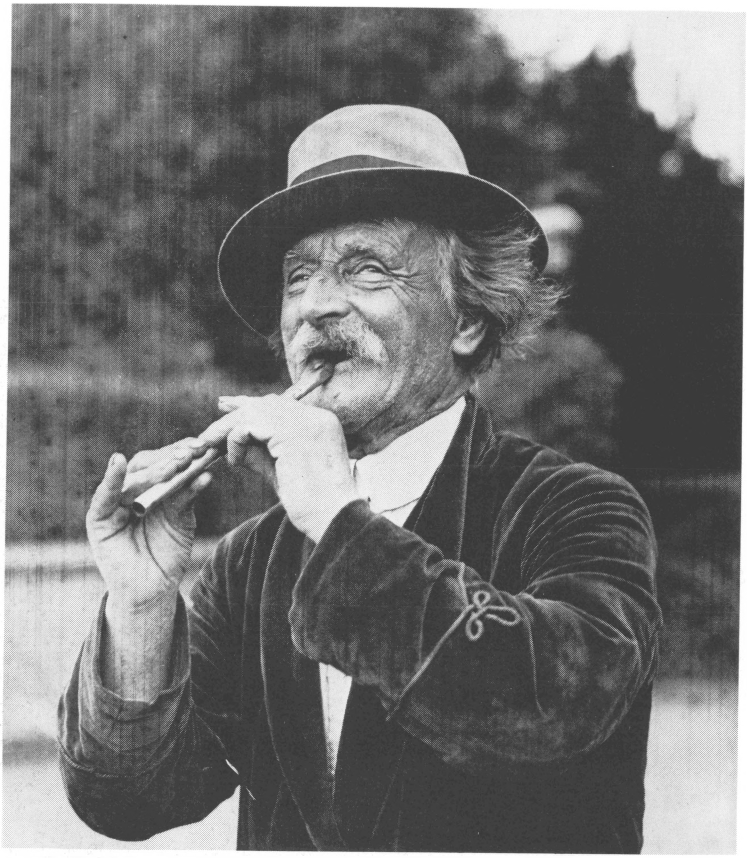
◀ **31**
A travelling salesman, Devon 1935.

▶ **32**
Road sweepers' dinner, winter 1935.

▼ **33**
Barrel Organ depot, Stepney 1933. The Italian /Cockney owner hired out the barrel organs, and the price varied from a shilling to half-a-crown a day, depending on the number of tunes that the organ could play.

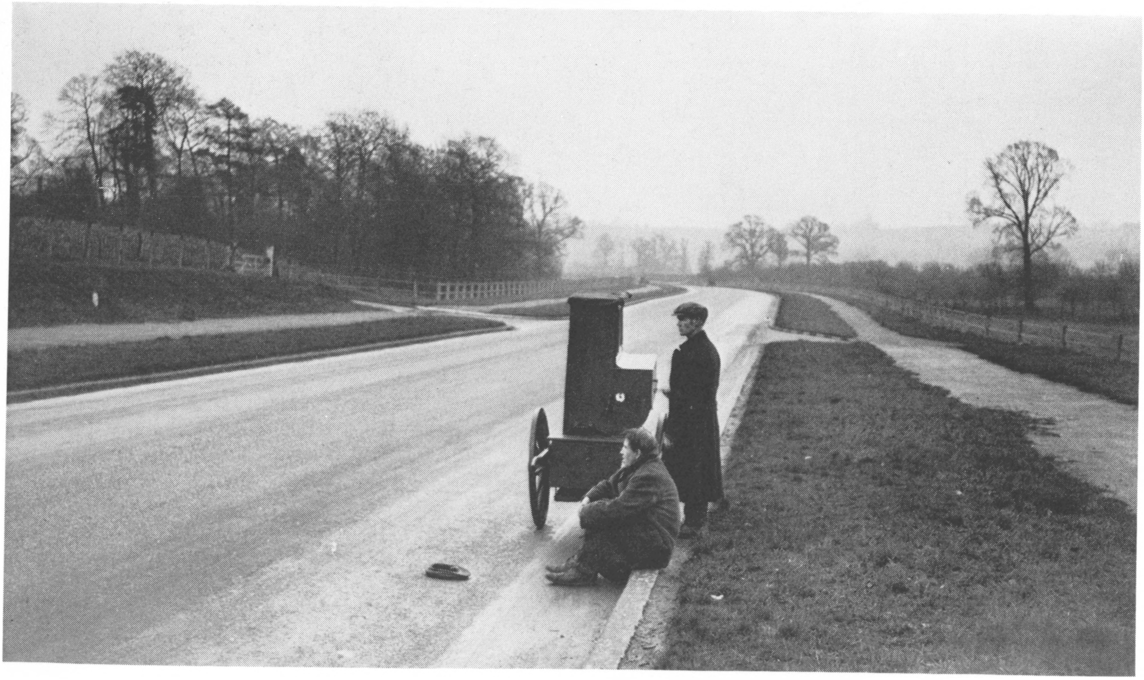






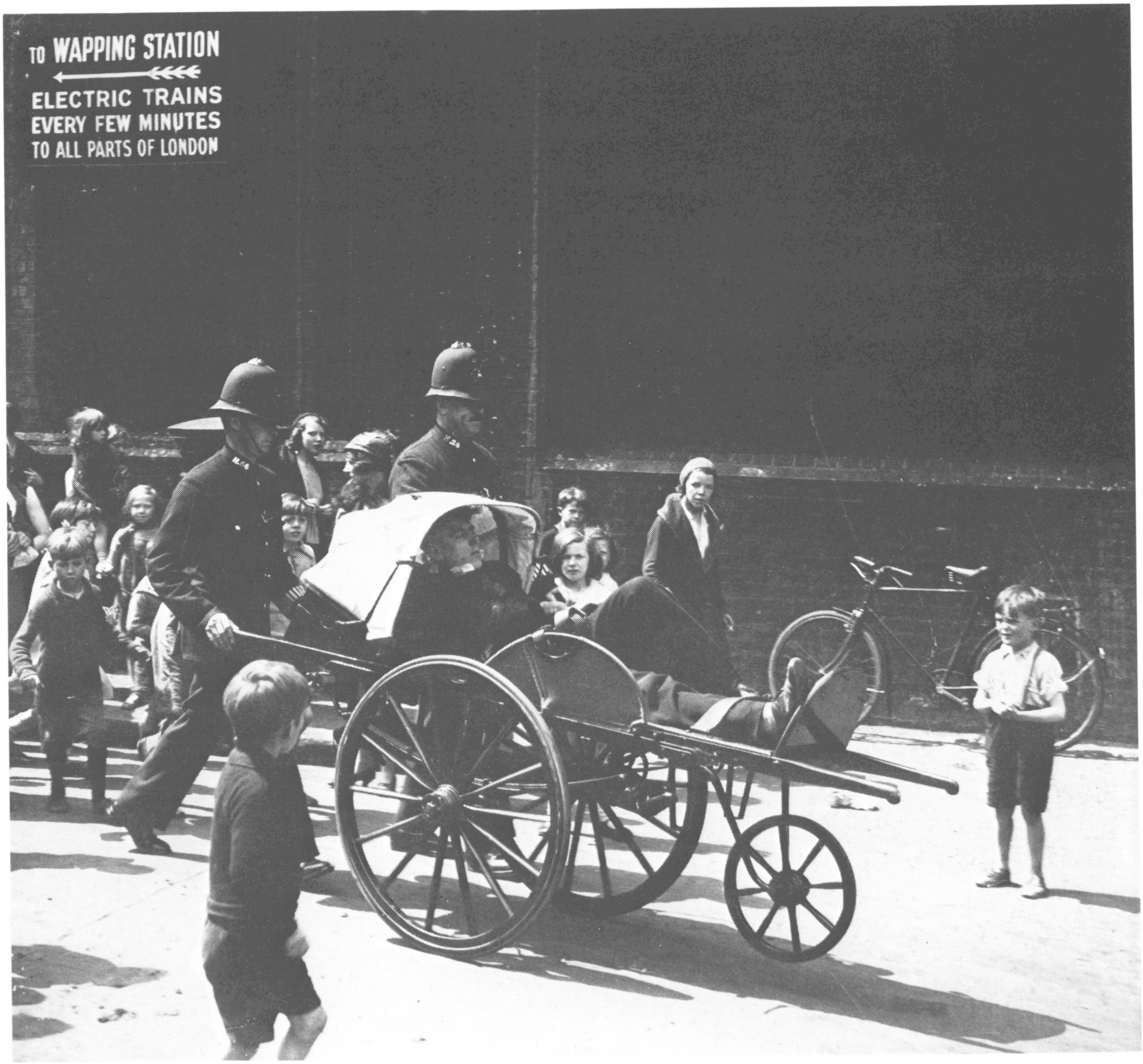
◀ **34**
'Whistling Rufus', the street musician, with a penny whistle, 1937.

▼ **35**
A barrel organ far from home, 1934.

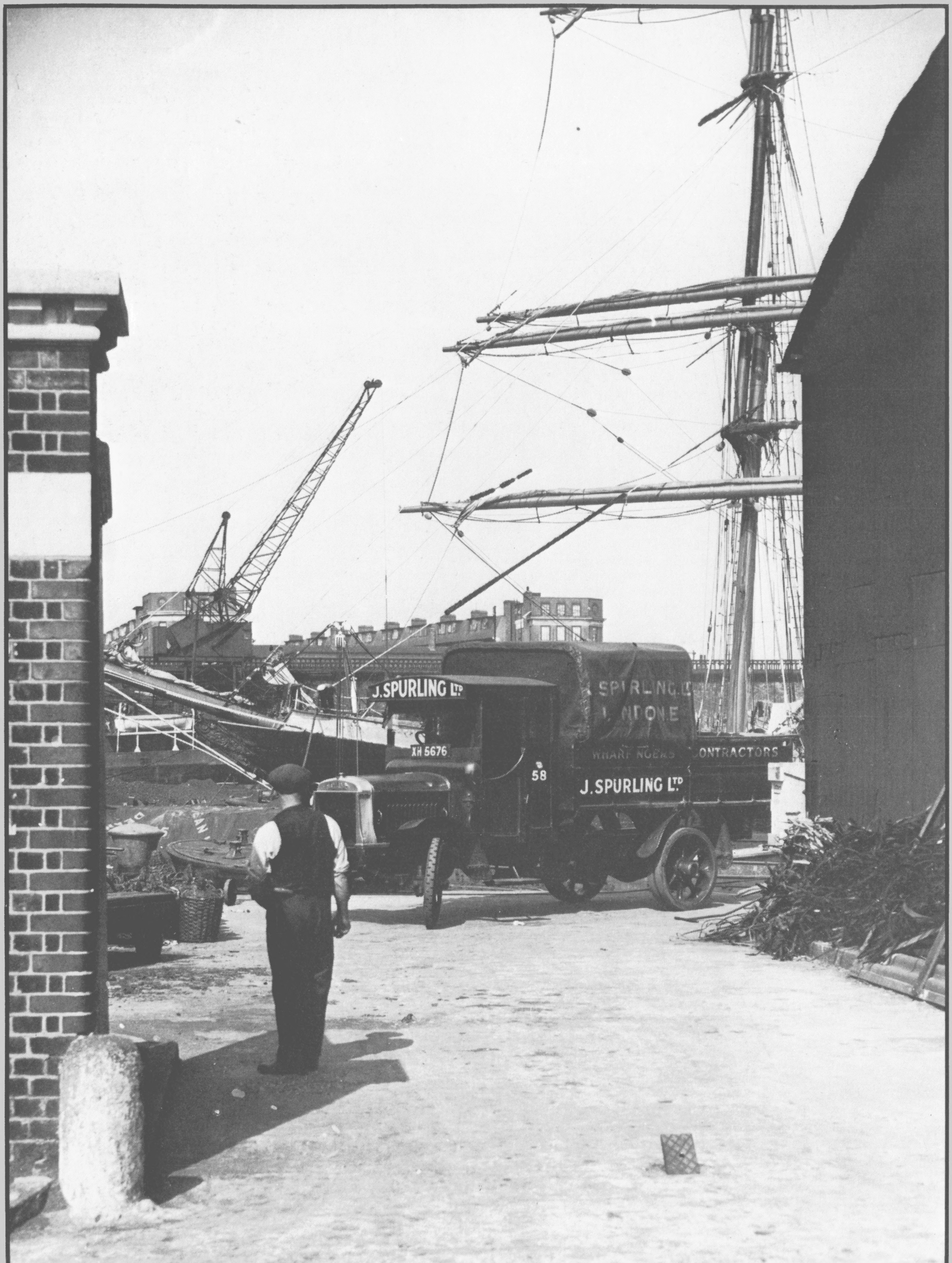


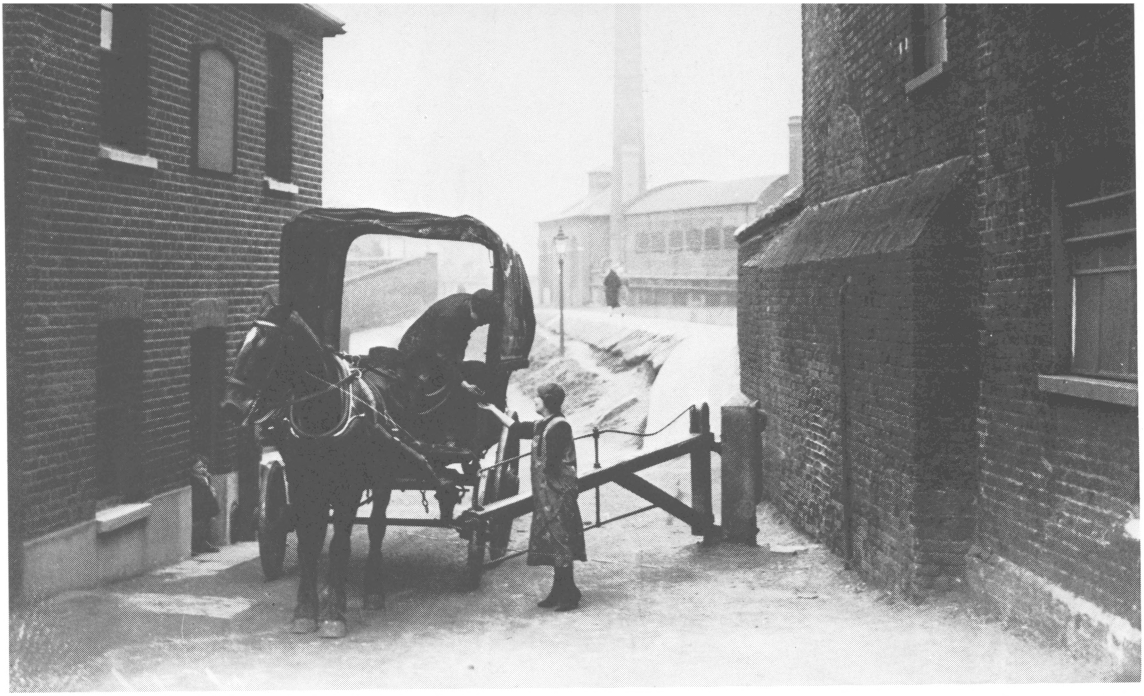
ON THE STREET

The city streets of the thirties were often squalid but teeming with interest and vitality, not yet impersonalized by the motor car, smelling of horses and manure. The horses were often led through the terraced houses to their stables in the backyards.


TO WAPPING STATION
ELECTRIC TRAINS
EVERY FEW MINUTES
TO ALL PARTS OF LONDON

36
Police remove an alcoholic
by police ambulance, 1931.

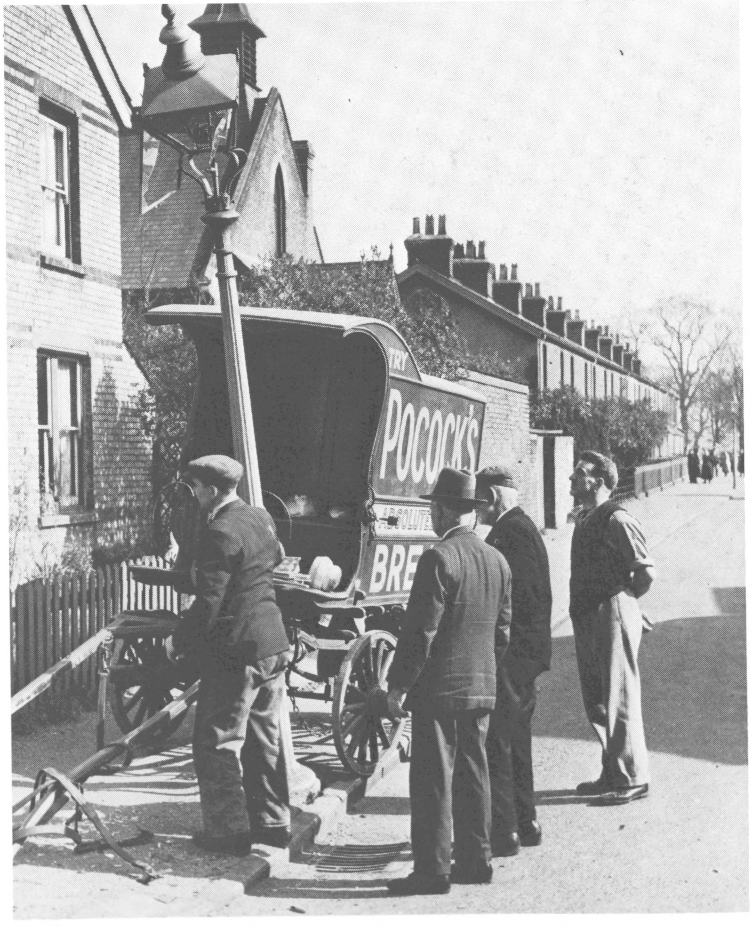

J. SPURLING Lᵀᴰ
XH 5676
58
J. SPURLING Lᵀᴰ
SPURLING L
WHARFINGERS
CONTRACTORS



◀ **37**
Sailing ships could still be seen in the docks, 1933.

▲ **38**
A toll gate in East London.

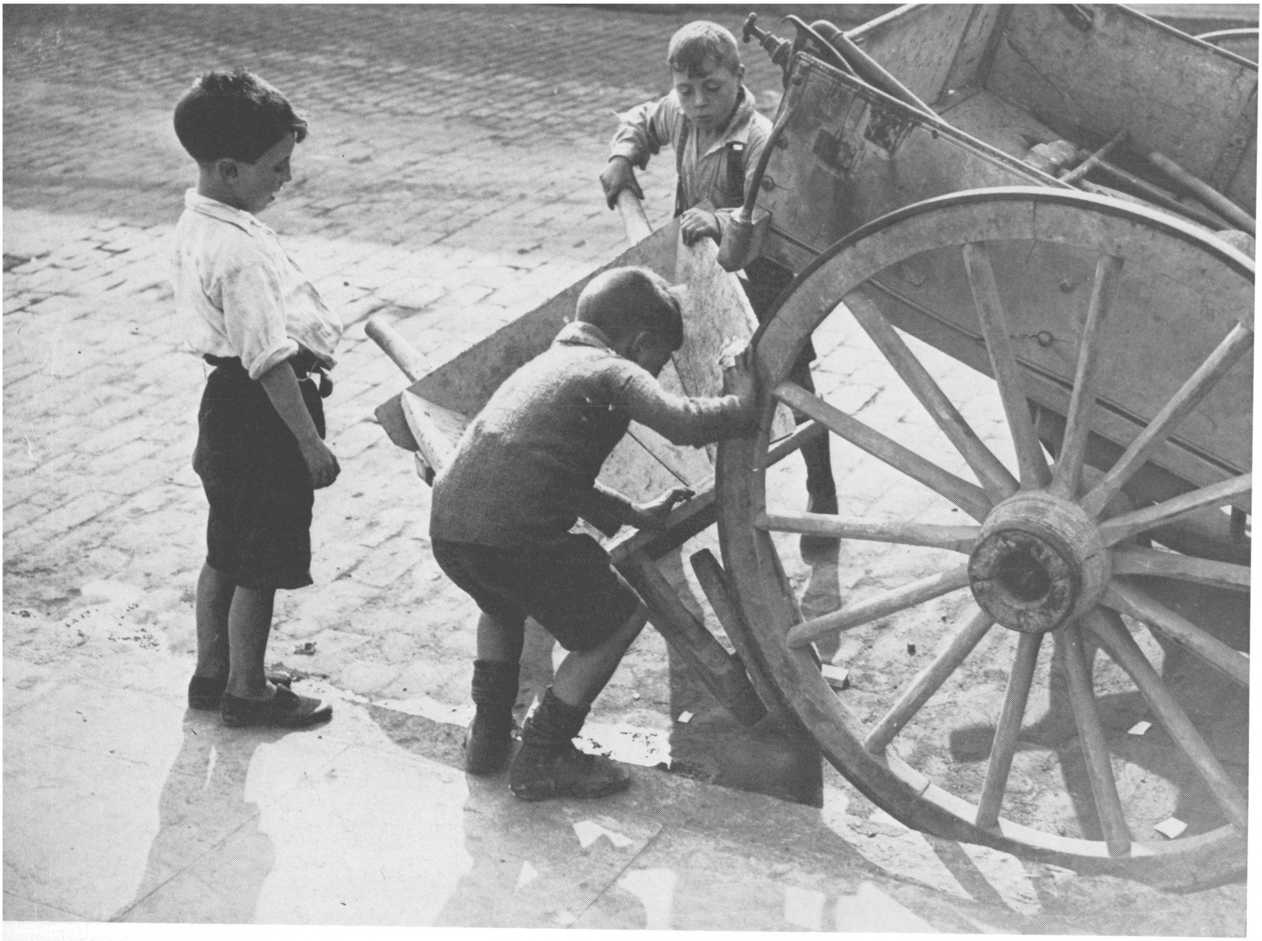
▶ **39**
The drama of a runaway horse provided occasional excitement.

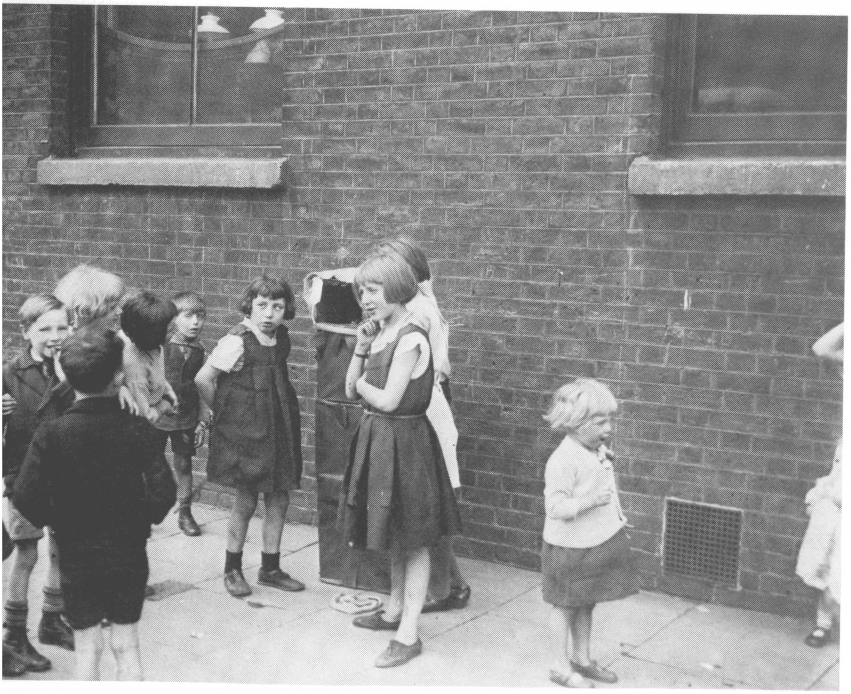

TRY
POCOCK'S
ABSOLUTEL
BREA

◀ **40**
A street in Limehouse, 1933, since demolished. Women sat out on the pavement on warm days.

◀ **41**
Children and toddlers played in the street; even a child of this age could be allowed to play outside, wander off and come back in the care of the policeman on the beat.

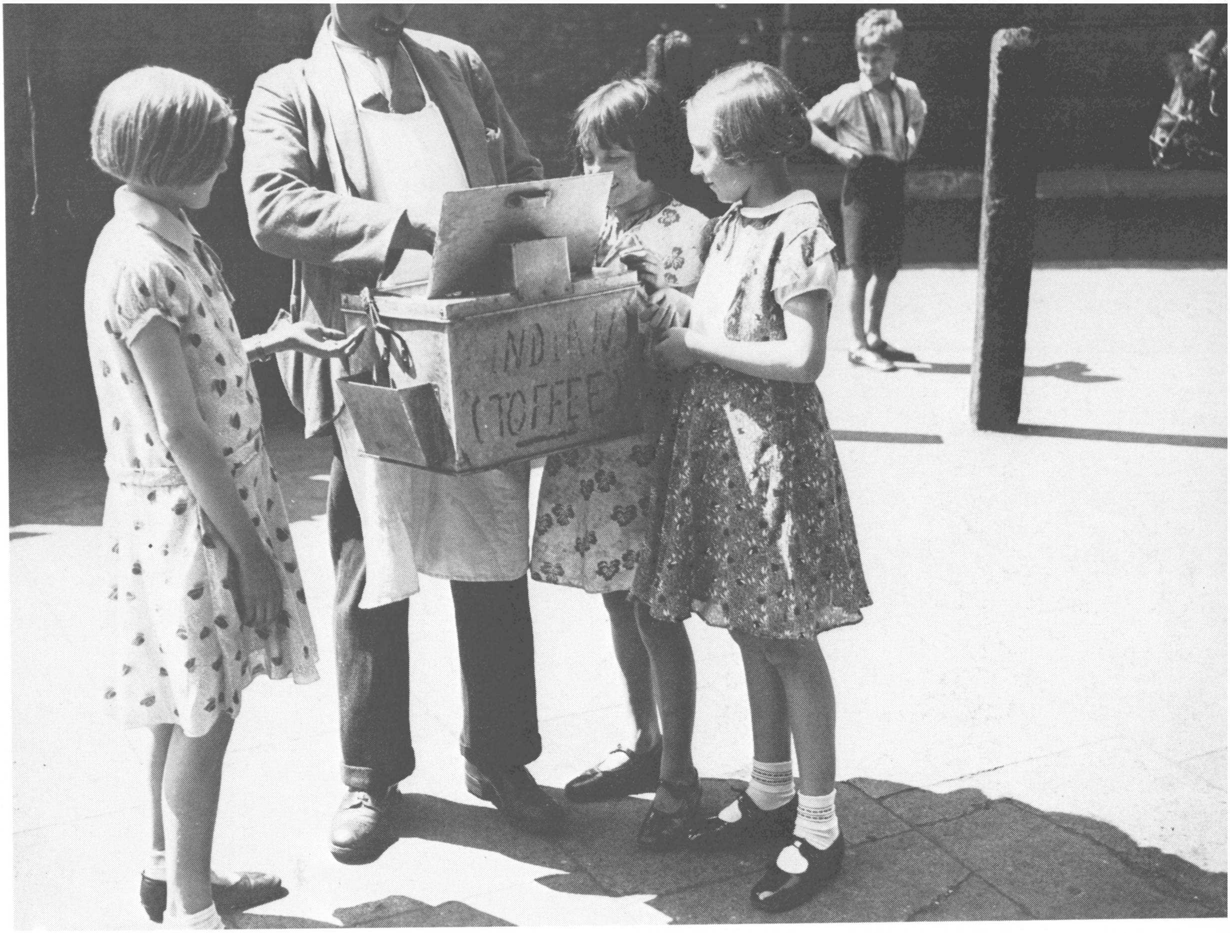
▲ **42**
There were few toys; the street urchins found their own amusements.

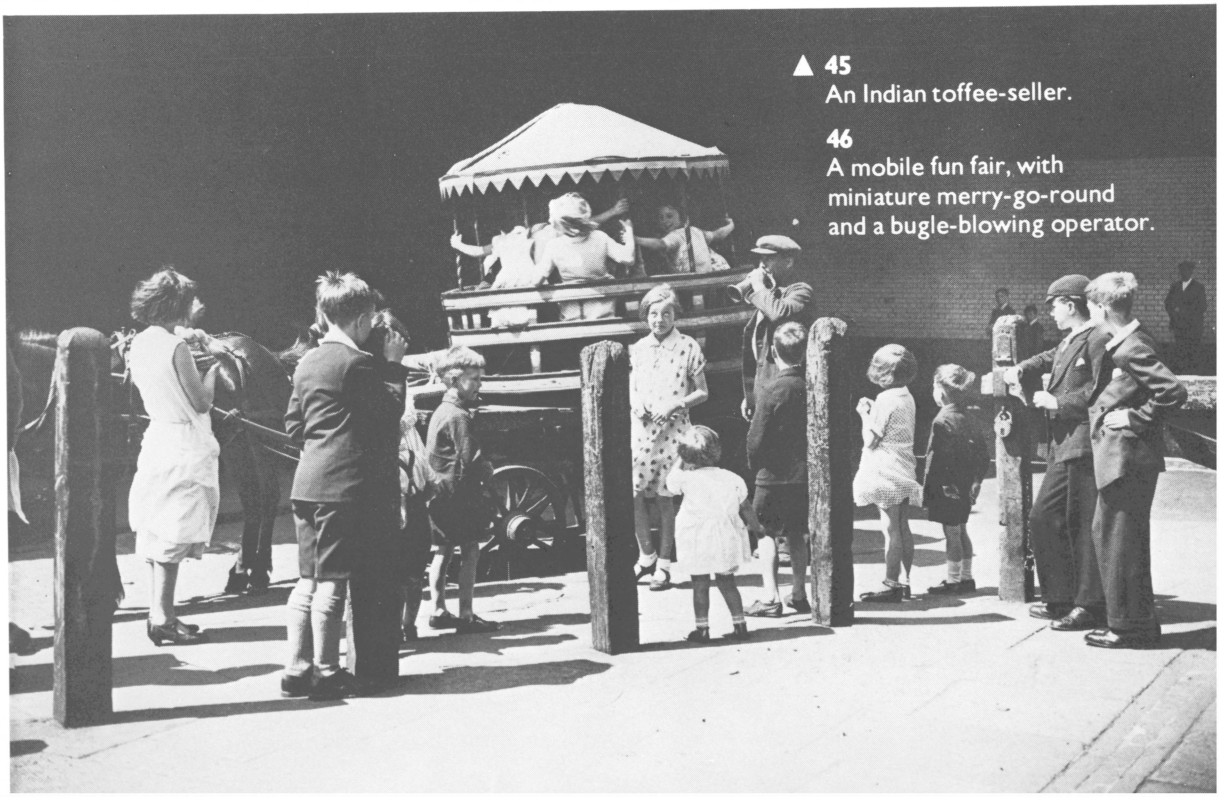




▲ **43**
Children in Wapping, 1933.

◀ **44**
A home-made puppet theatre.


INDIAN
TOFFEE



▲ **45**
An Indian toffee-seller.

46
A mobile fun fair, with miniature merry-go-round and a bugle-blowing operator.

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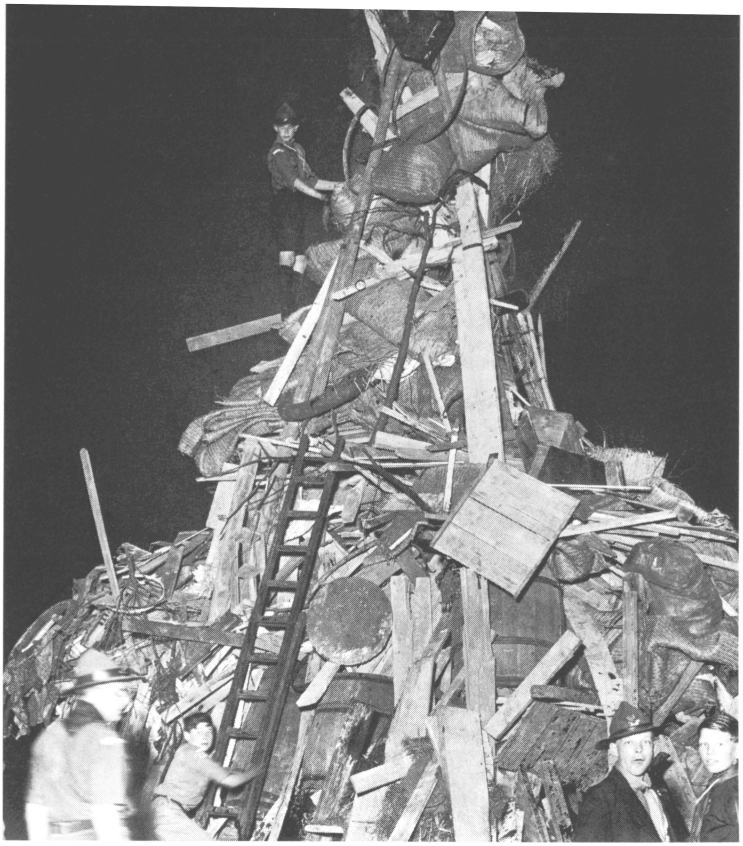
REPAIRS.
"JUST LIKE NEW."

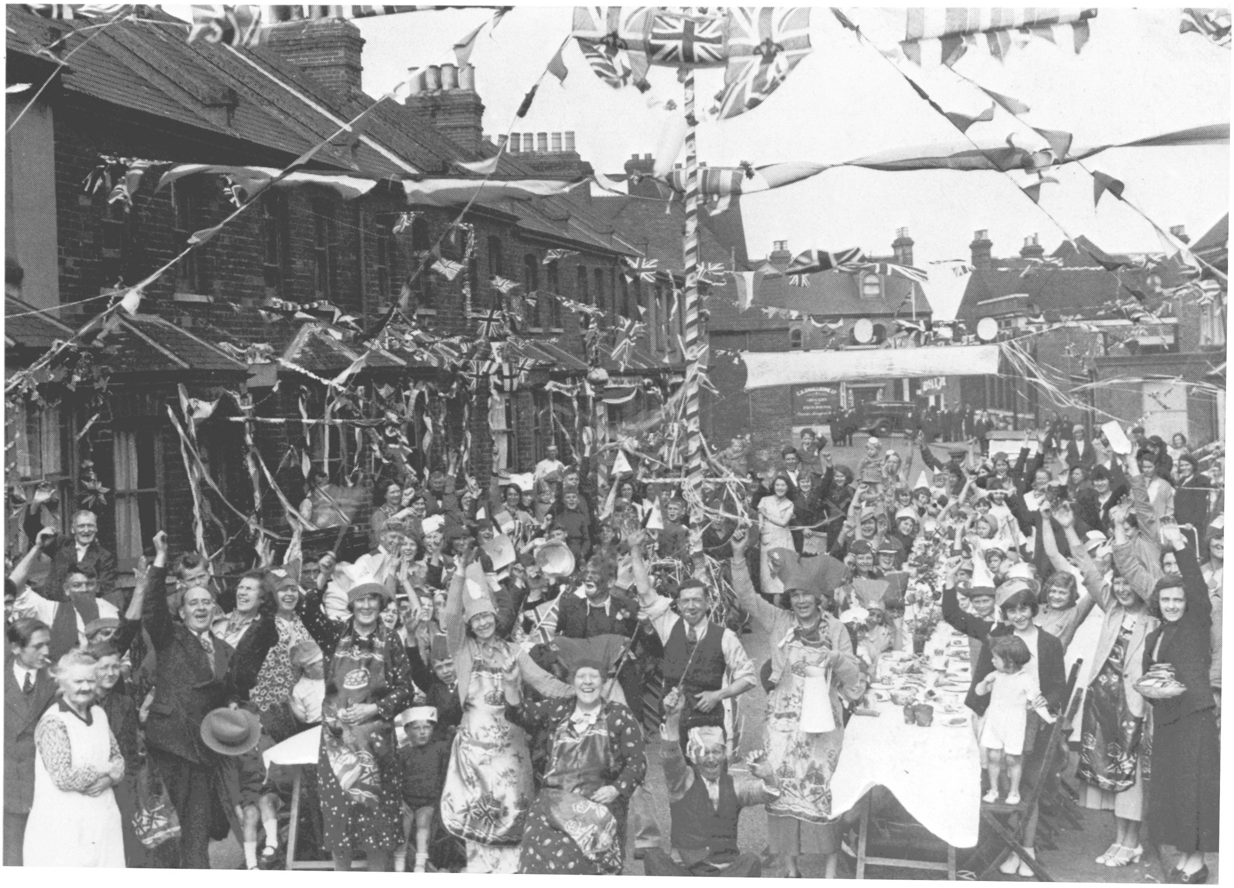
▲ **47**
As few people had cars, trade deliveries were commonplace.

◀ **48**
By 1938 road traffic and road accidents had much increased and the children were no longer able to play in the streets.

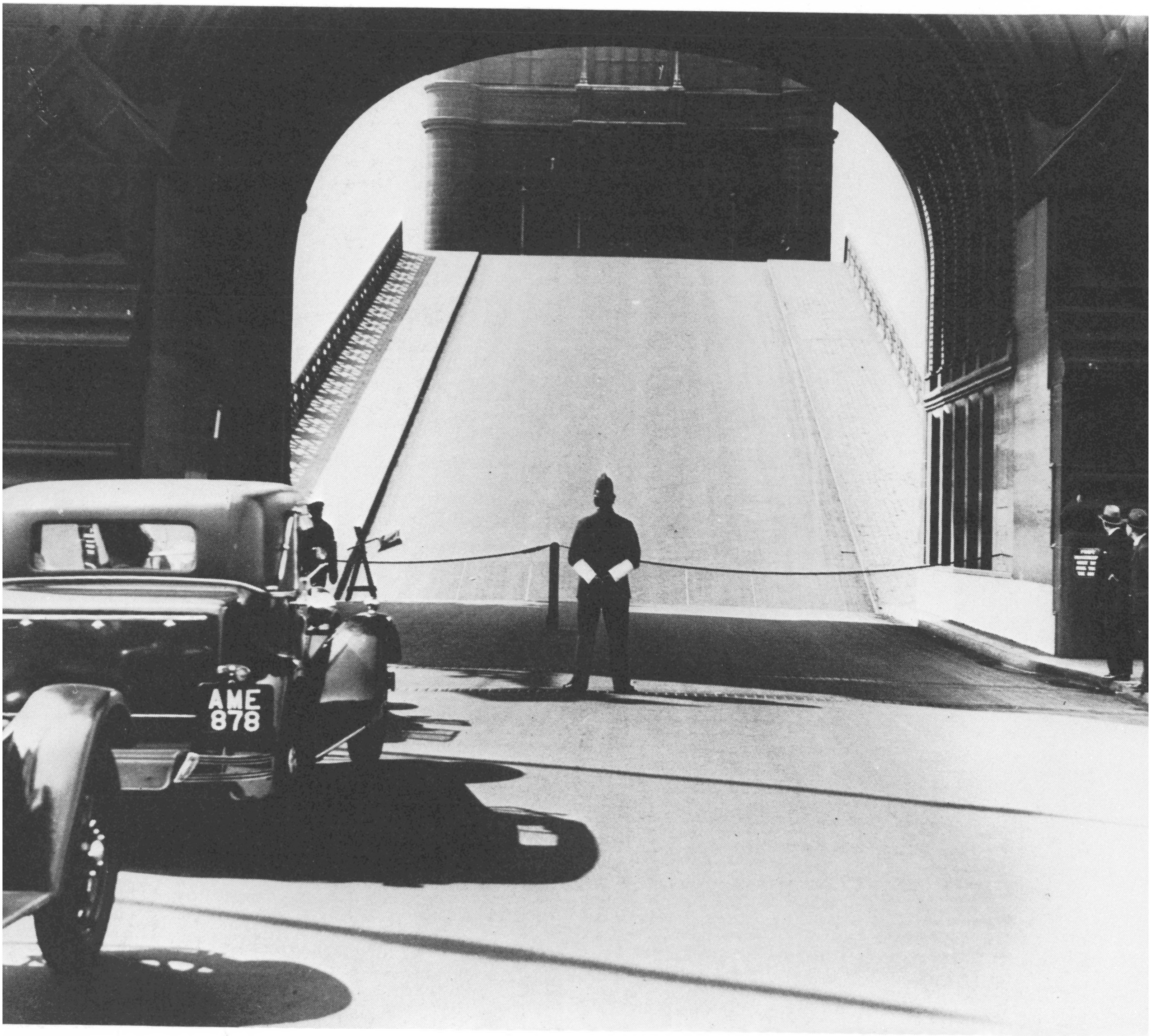
► **49**
Boy Scouts built this monster bonfire for King George V's Jubilee in 1935, which was an astonishing display of loyalty and affection. In his Jubilee broadcast the King, deeply moved, said, 'How can I express what is in my heart? . . . I can only say to you, my very dear people, that the Queen and I thank you from the depths of our hearts for all the loyalty and – may I say? – the love with which this day and always you have surrounded us.'



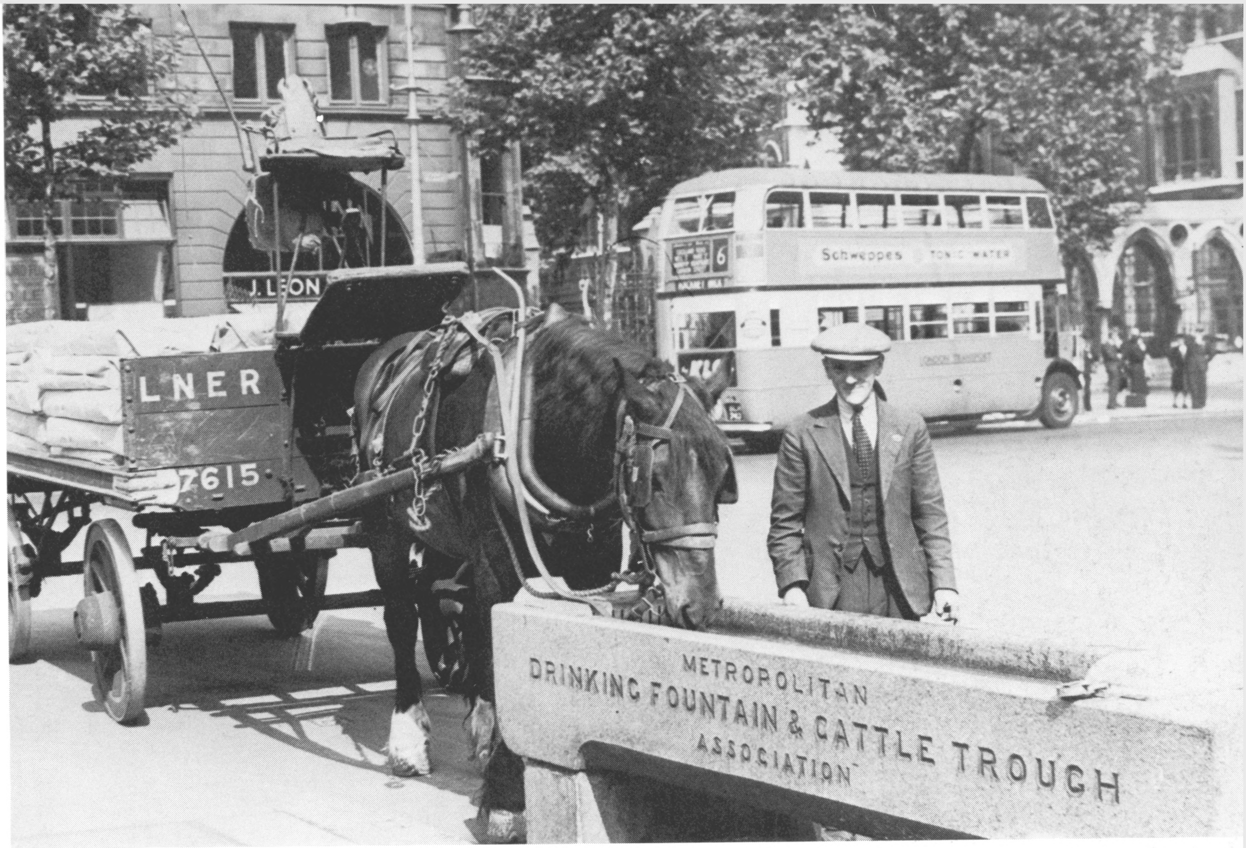
▼ **50**
Loyalty to the Crown survived the Abdication of Edward VIII and street parties such as this were given to celebrate George VI's coronation.



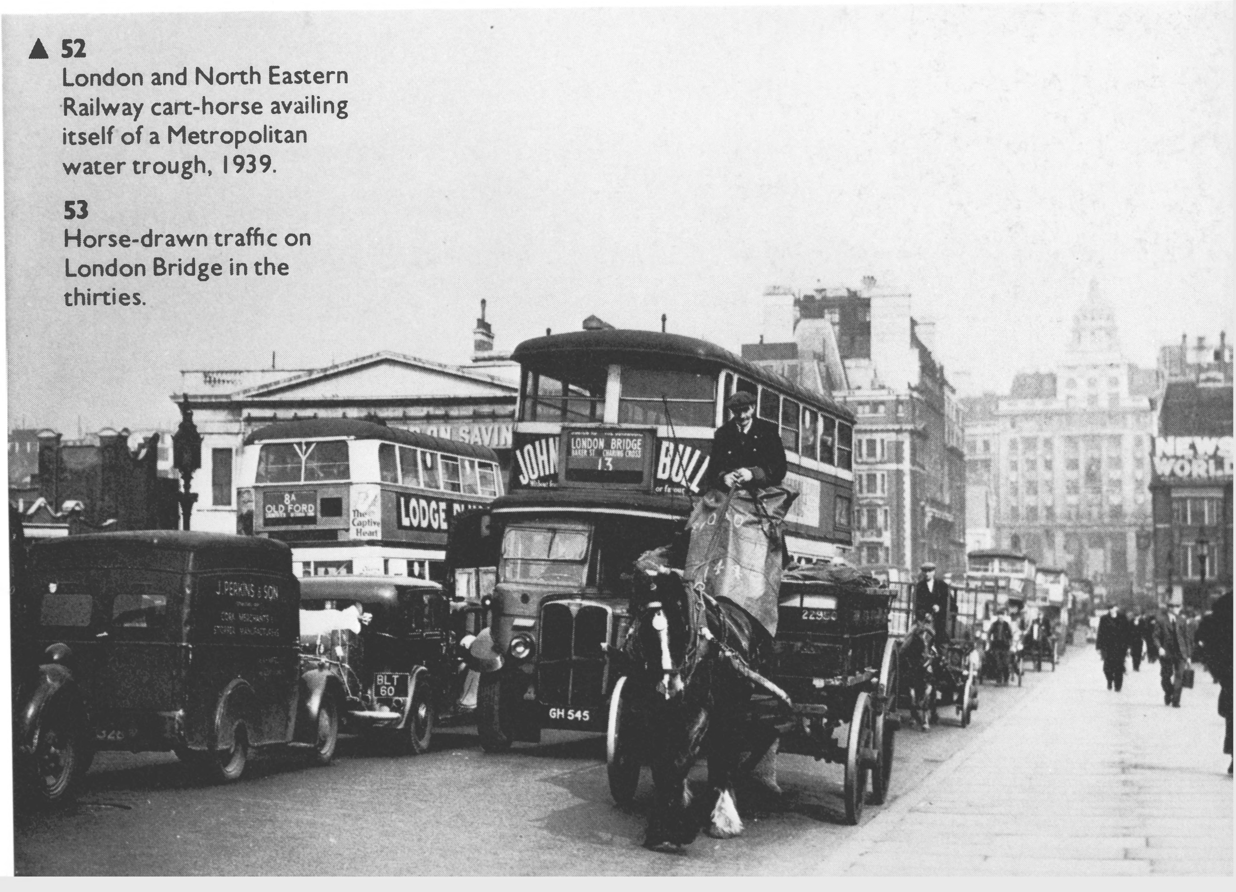
GETTING ABOUT



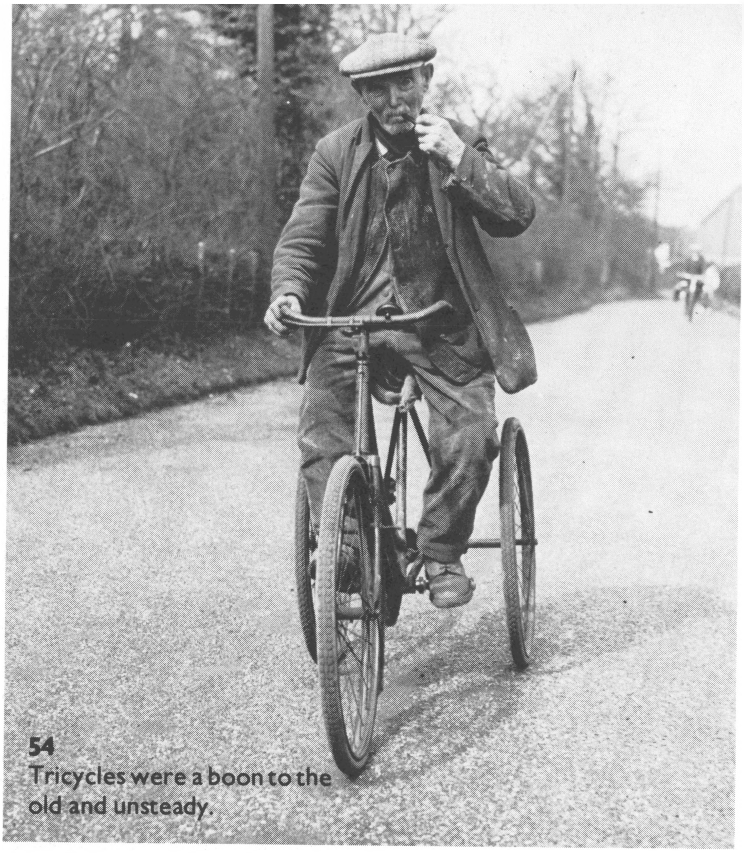
51
Road gives way to river:
Tower Bridge 1933.


J. LEON
L N E R
7615
Schweppes TONIC WATER
6
METROPOLITAN
DRINKING FOUNTAIN & CATTLE TROUGH
ASSOCIATION

▲ **52**
London and North Eastern Railway cart-horse availing itself of a Metropolitan water trough, 1939.


LONDON BRIDGE
BAKER ST. CHARING CROSS
13
JOHN
BULL
8A
OLD FORD
LODGE
The Captive Heart
J. PERKINS & SON
BLT 60
GH 545
22900
NEWS
WORLD

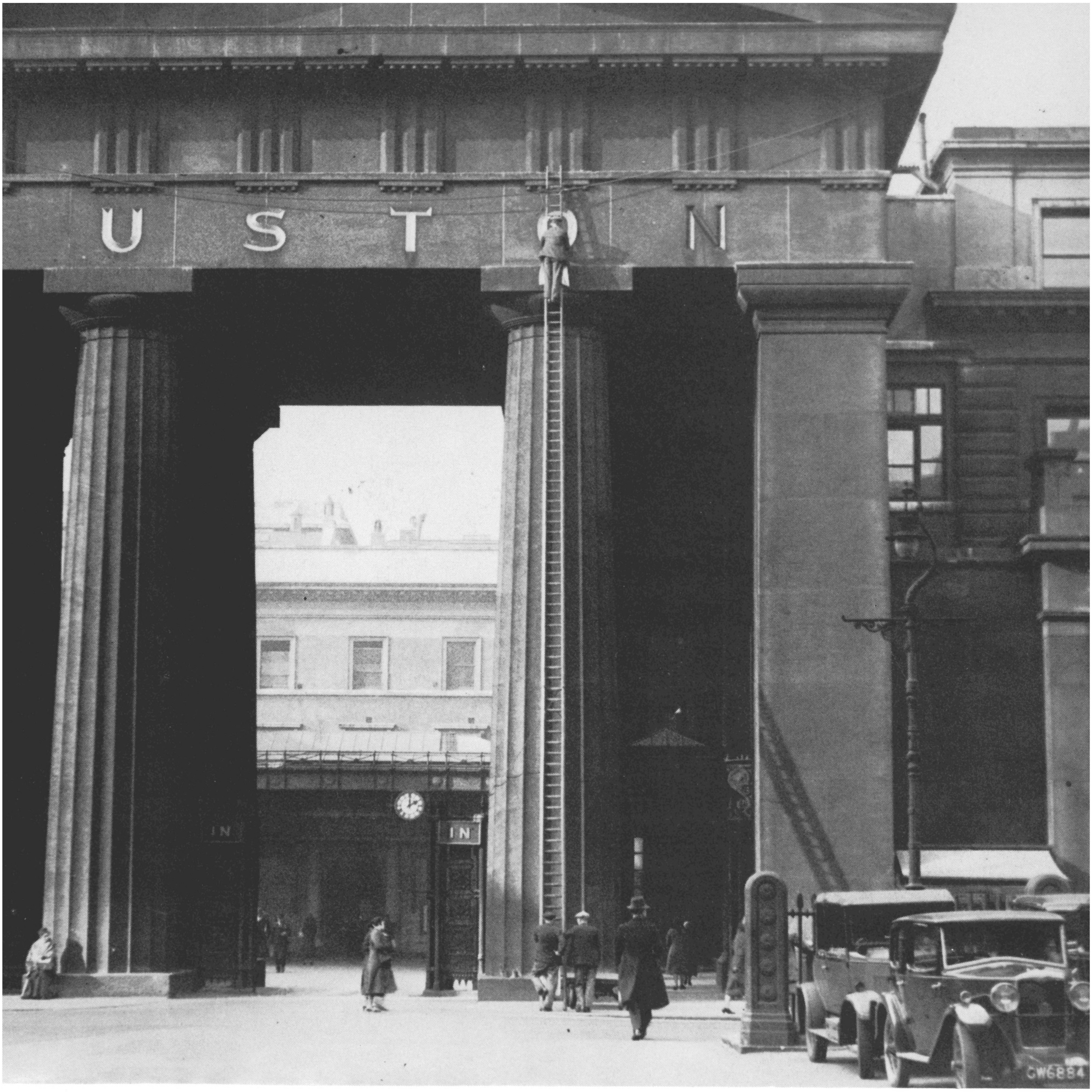
53
Horse-drawn traffic on London Bridge in the thirties.



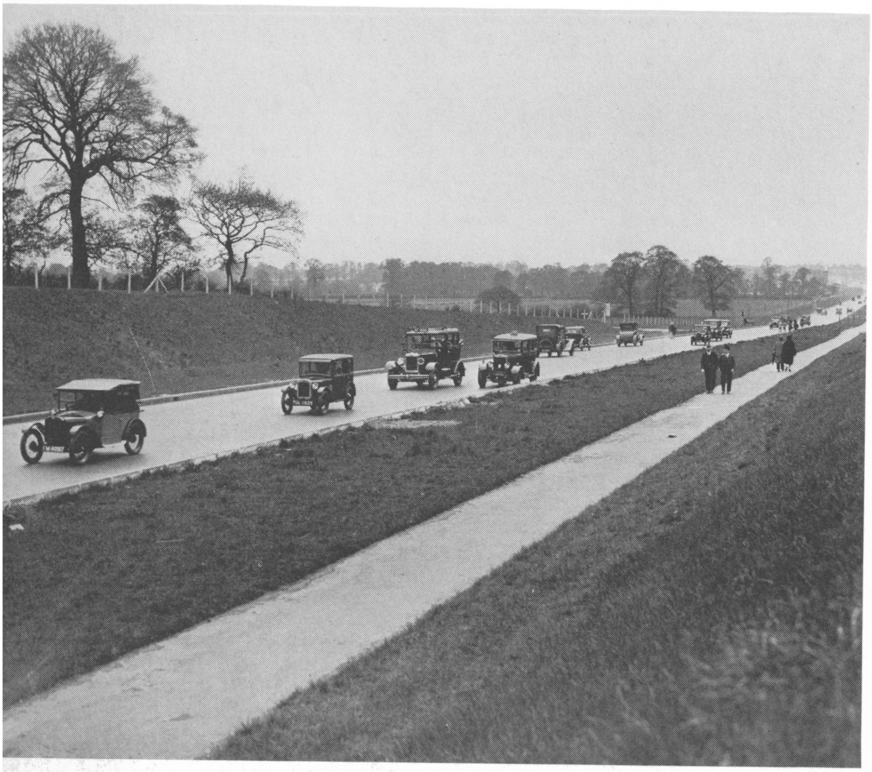
54
Tricycles were a boon to the old and unsteady.

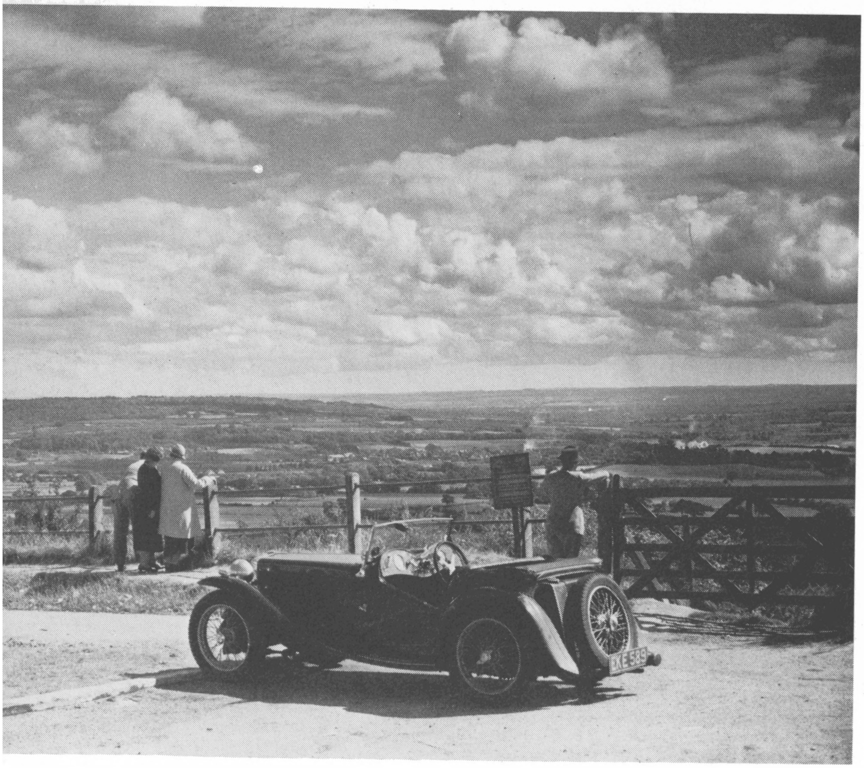
TD 49
MANOR PARK STN
CAMBRIDGE PARK RD
BLAKEHALL ROAD
ALDERSBROOK RD
STATION RD MANOR PK
HIGH ST. EAST HAM
MANOR WAY

◀ **55**
Women waving to a steamer at London Docks in 1934. Boats and trains still carried most Britons on long-distance journeys.


EUSTON
IN
IN
GW6884

▲ **56**
Re-gilding the lettering on Euston Station's late-lamented Doric arch, 1933.





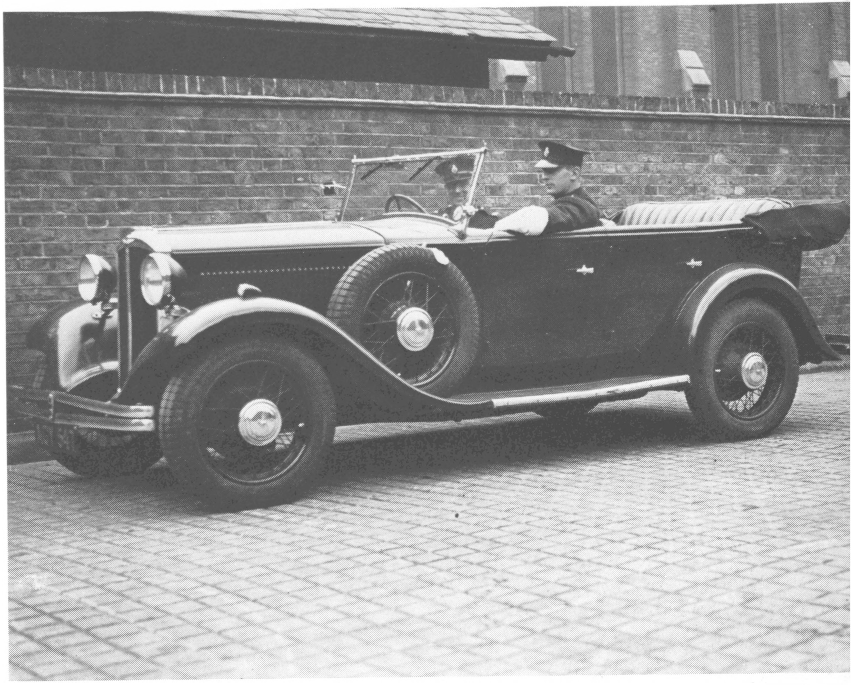
◀ **57**
Bank Holiday traffic on the Kingston By-pass, which had been opened in 1927.

◀ **58**
A drive in the country, 1938. There were almost two million private cars in Britain by 1939.

▶ **59**
Country roads were almost empty of traffic. Here in 1936 a car passes a horse-drawn mower.

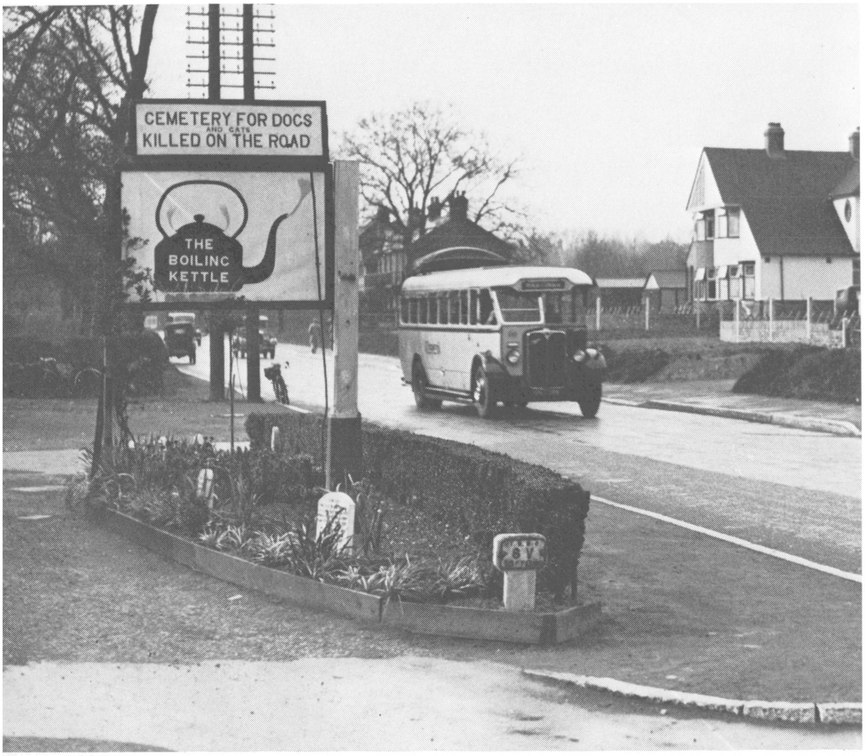
POWER
1/4

APPLES
FREE to
CUSTOMERS

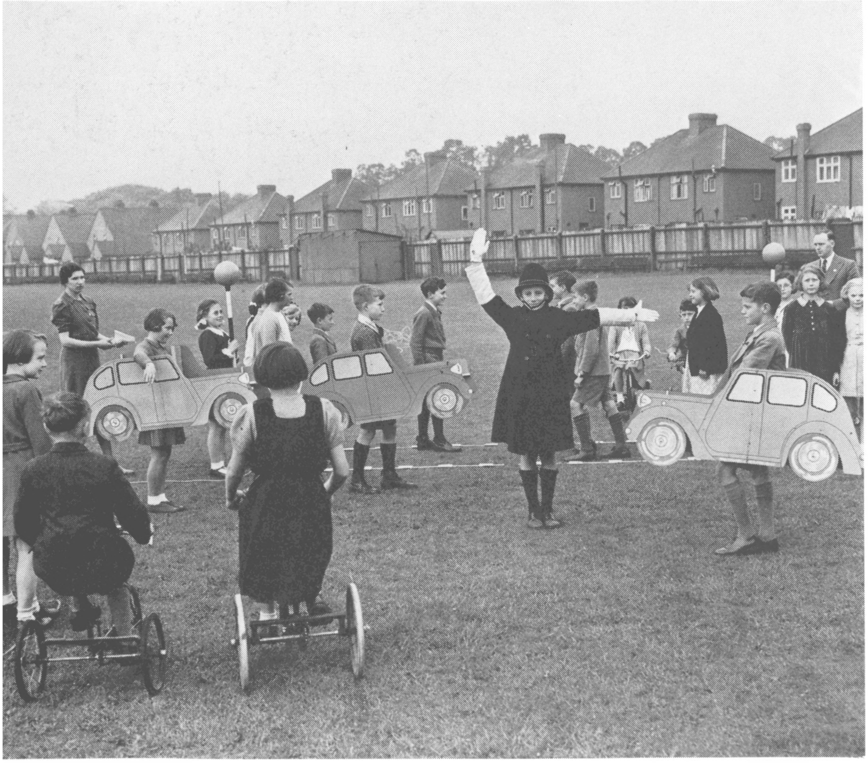


◀ **60**
At a country garage apples were given to customers, 1936. Petrol was 1s. 4d. (roughly 7p) a gallon.

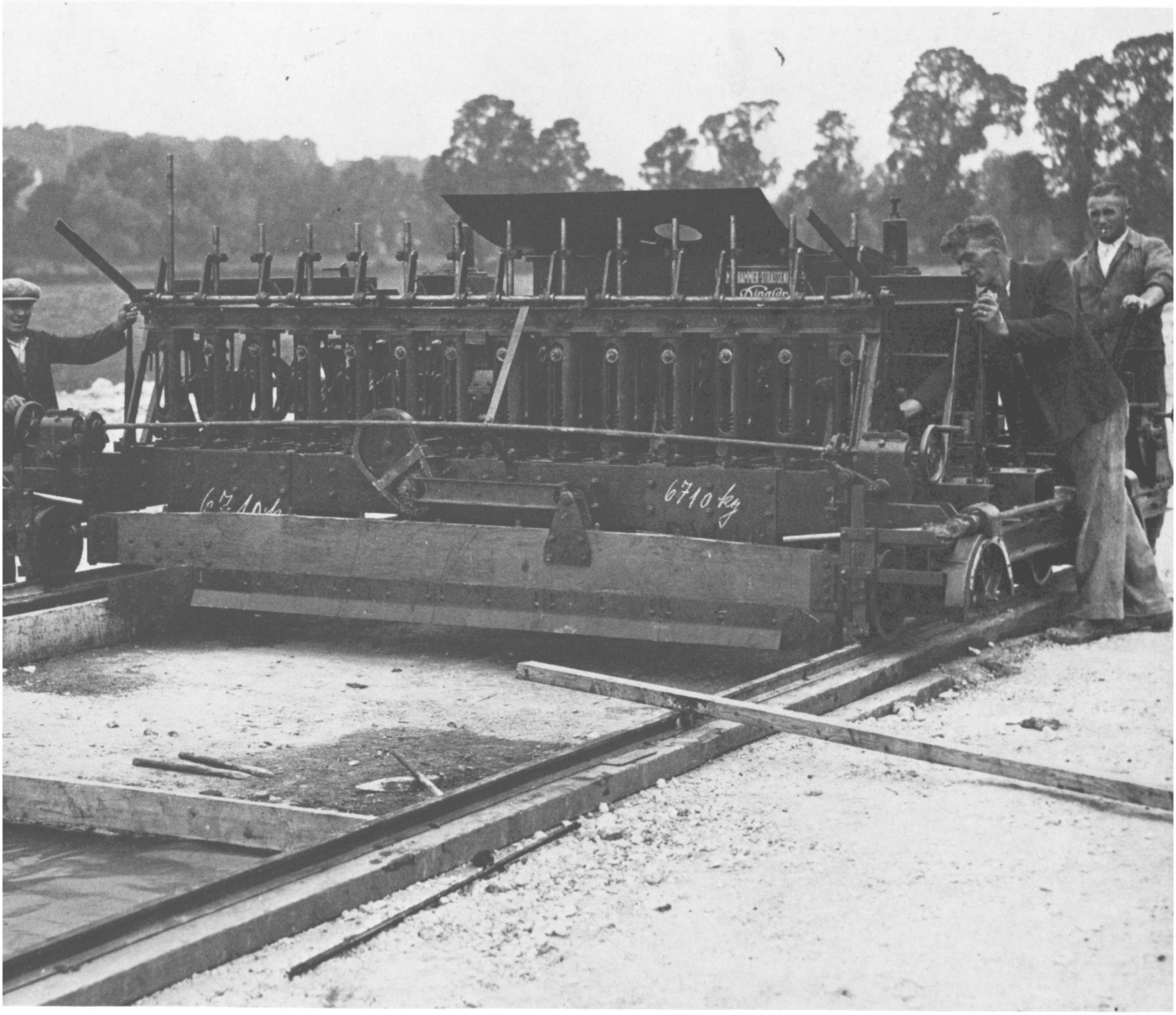
▲ **61**
A police car in 1933.


CEMETERY FOR DOGS AND CATS KILLED ON THE ROAD
THE BOILING KETTLE

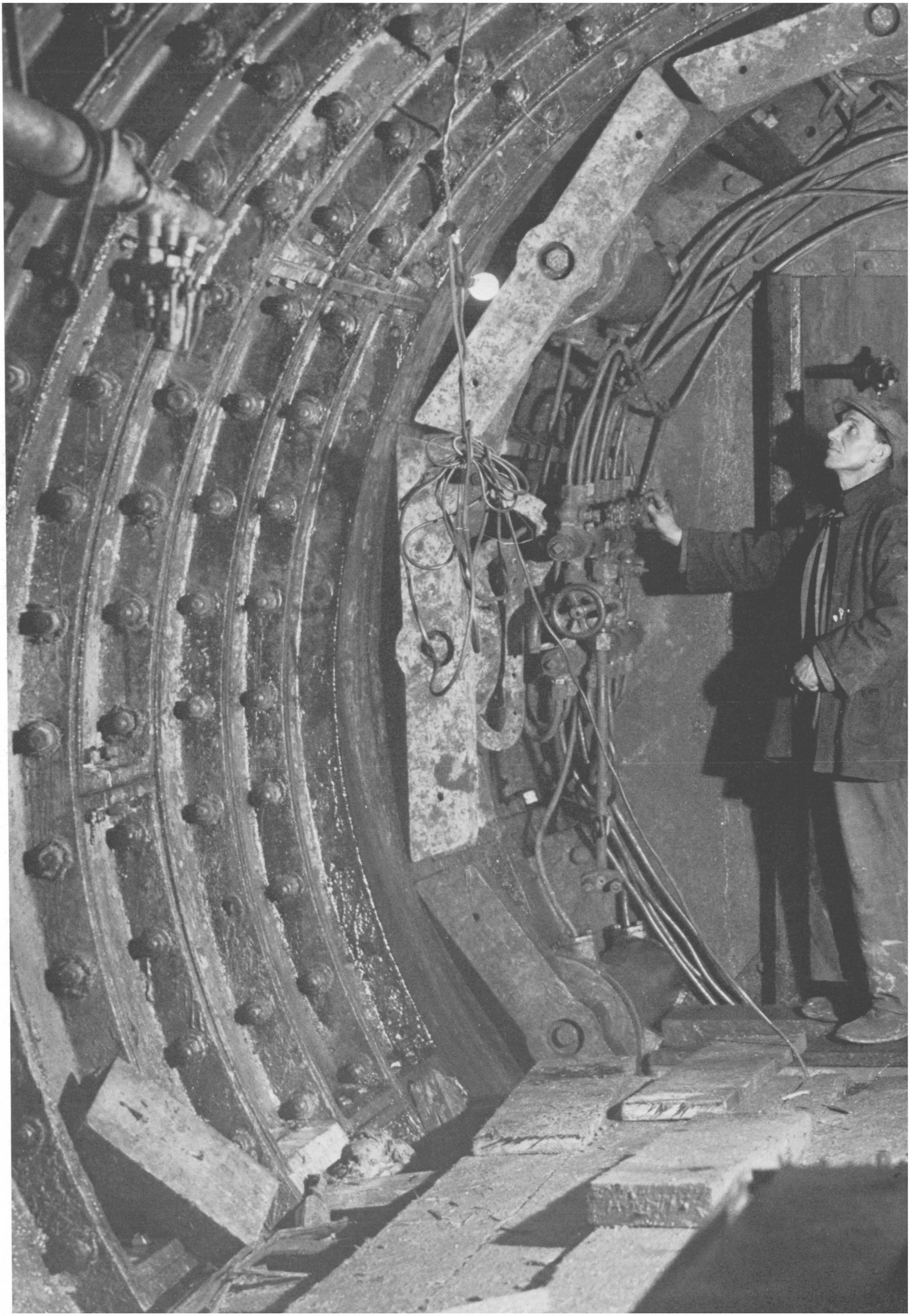
◄ **62**
With no driving test for motorists and no speed limit in built-up areas until 1934, road traffic took a heavy toll. This animal cemetery was in Hildenborough.

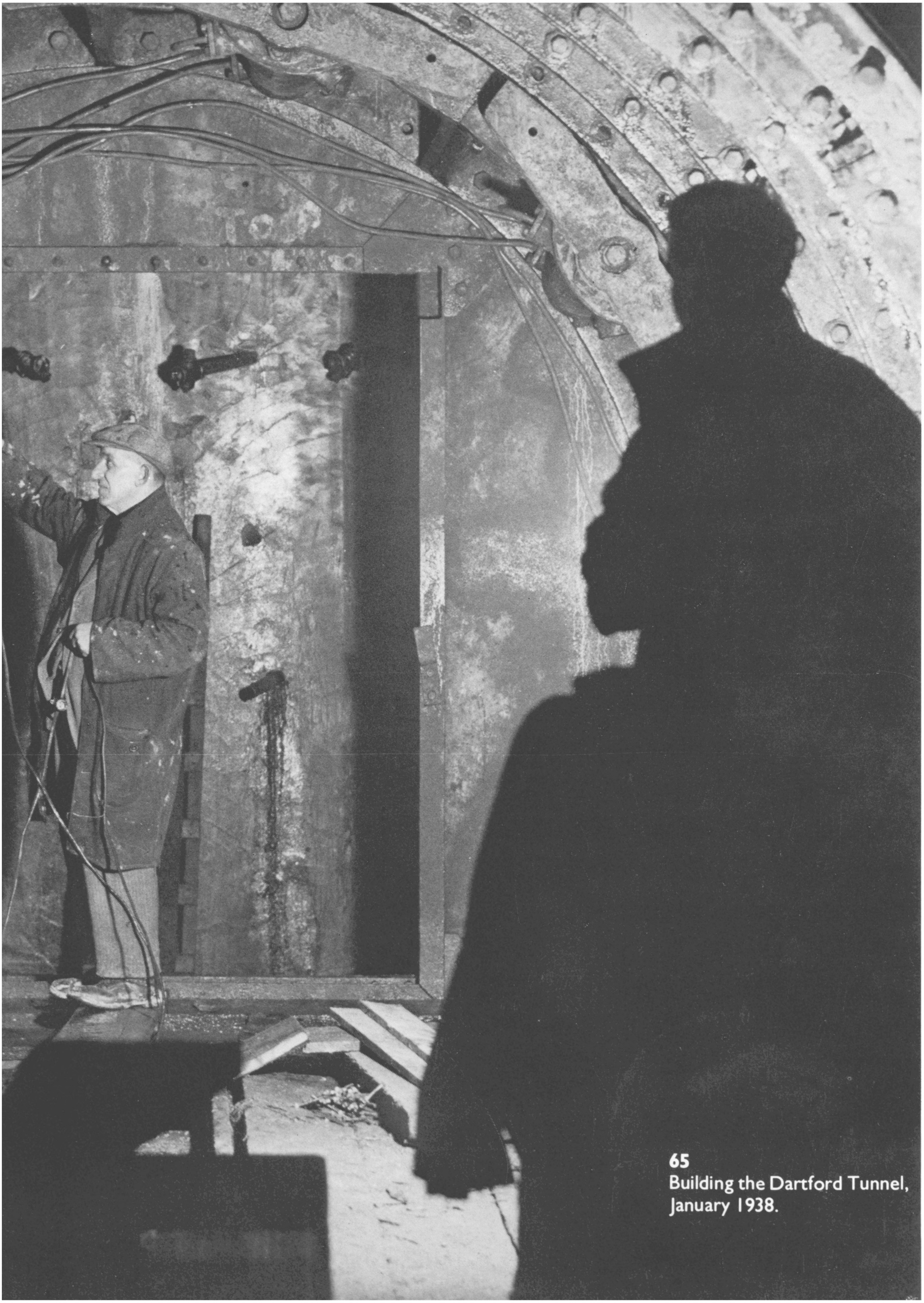


◄ **63**
Children practising for a road safety demonstration at the National Safety First Congress at Westminster in 1939.

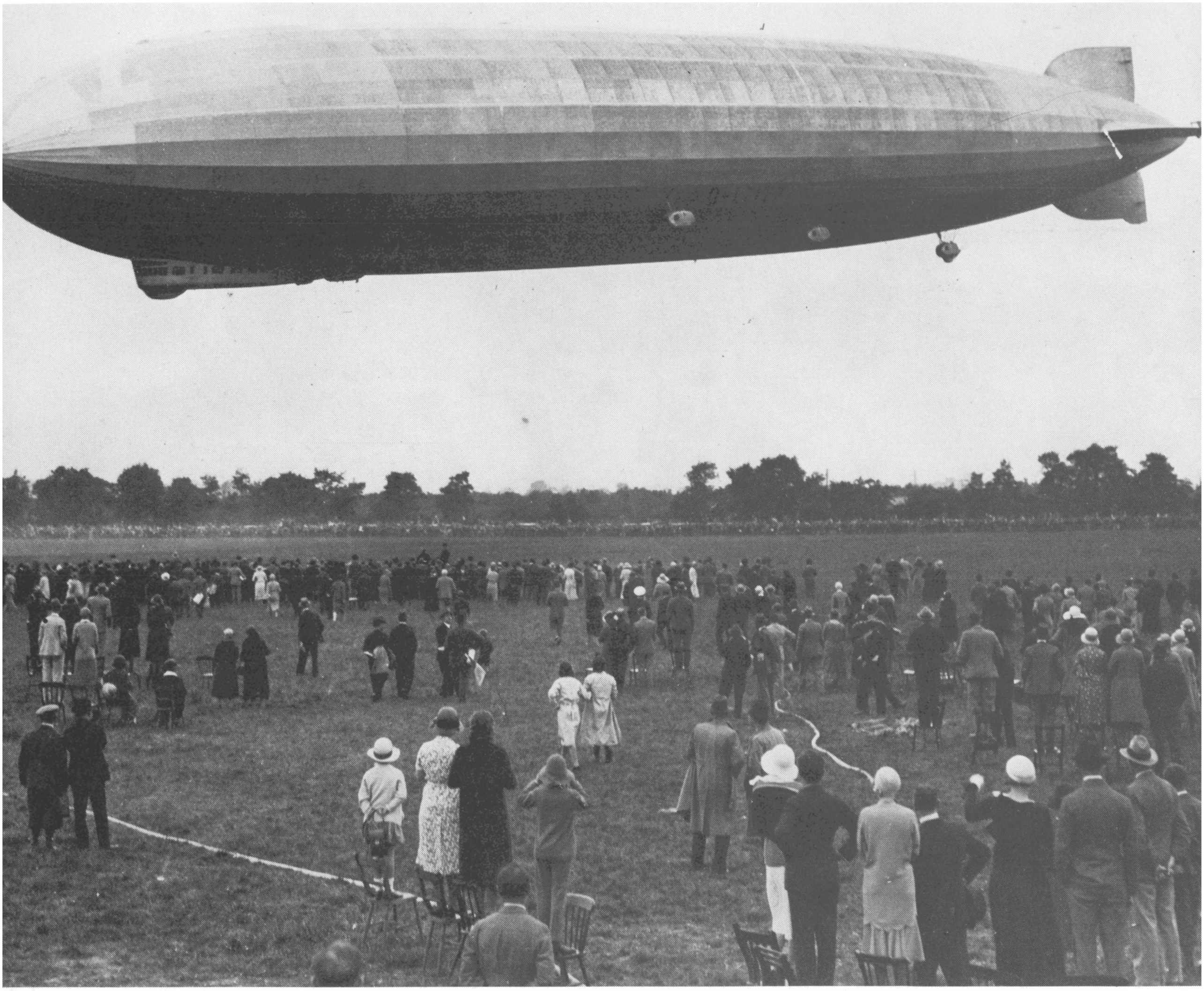

HAMMER STRASSEN
Dingler
6710 kg

▲ **64**
Few new roads were built in the thirties. This German mechanical navvy was used on the new Mickleham By-pass.





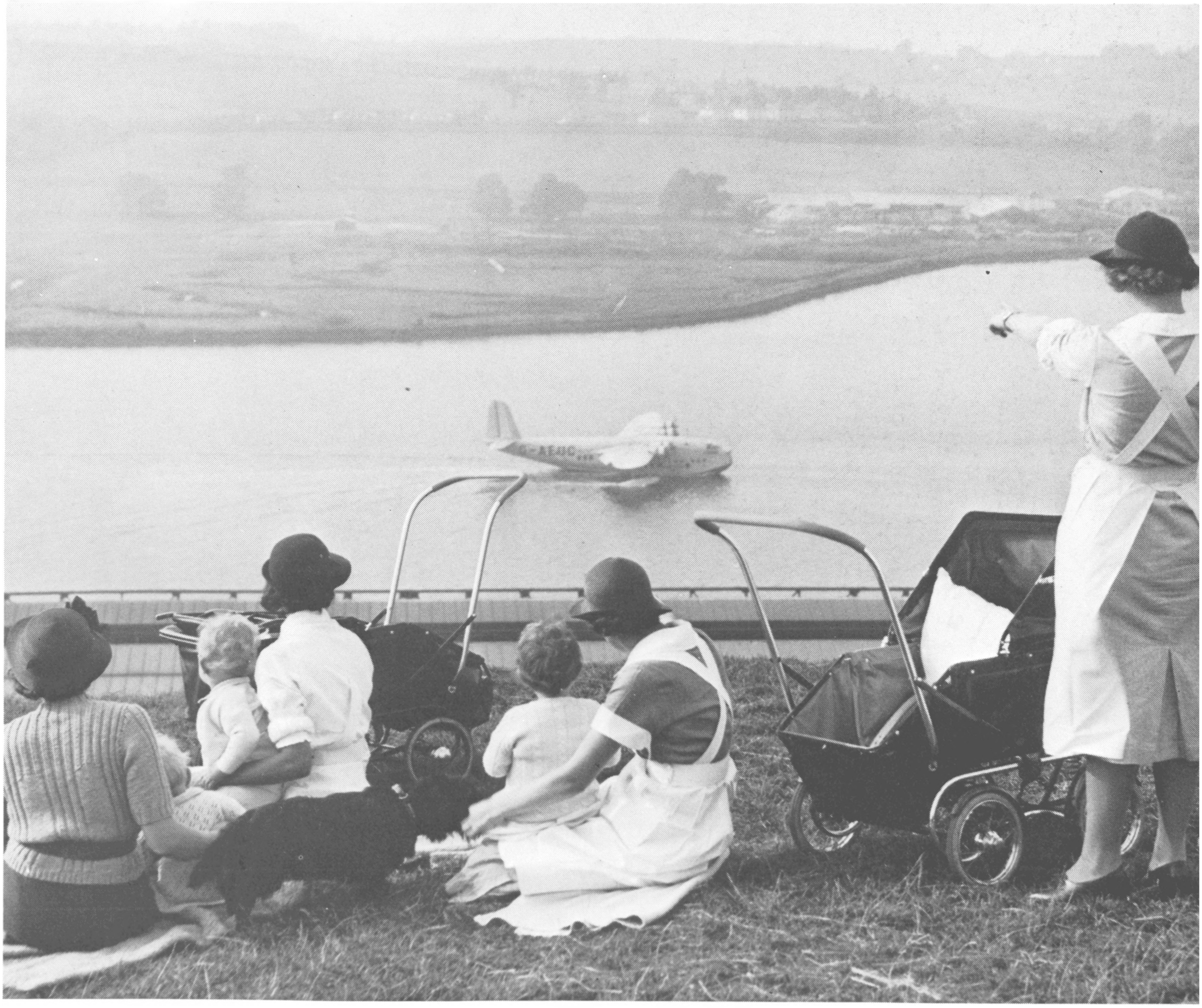
65
Building the Dartford Tunnel, January 1938.

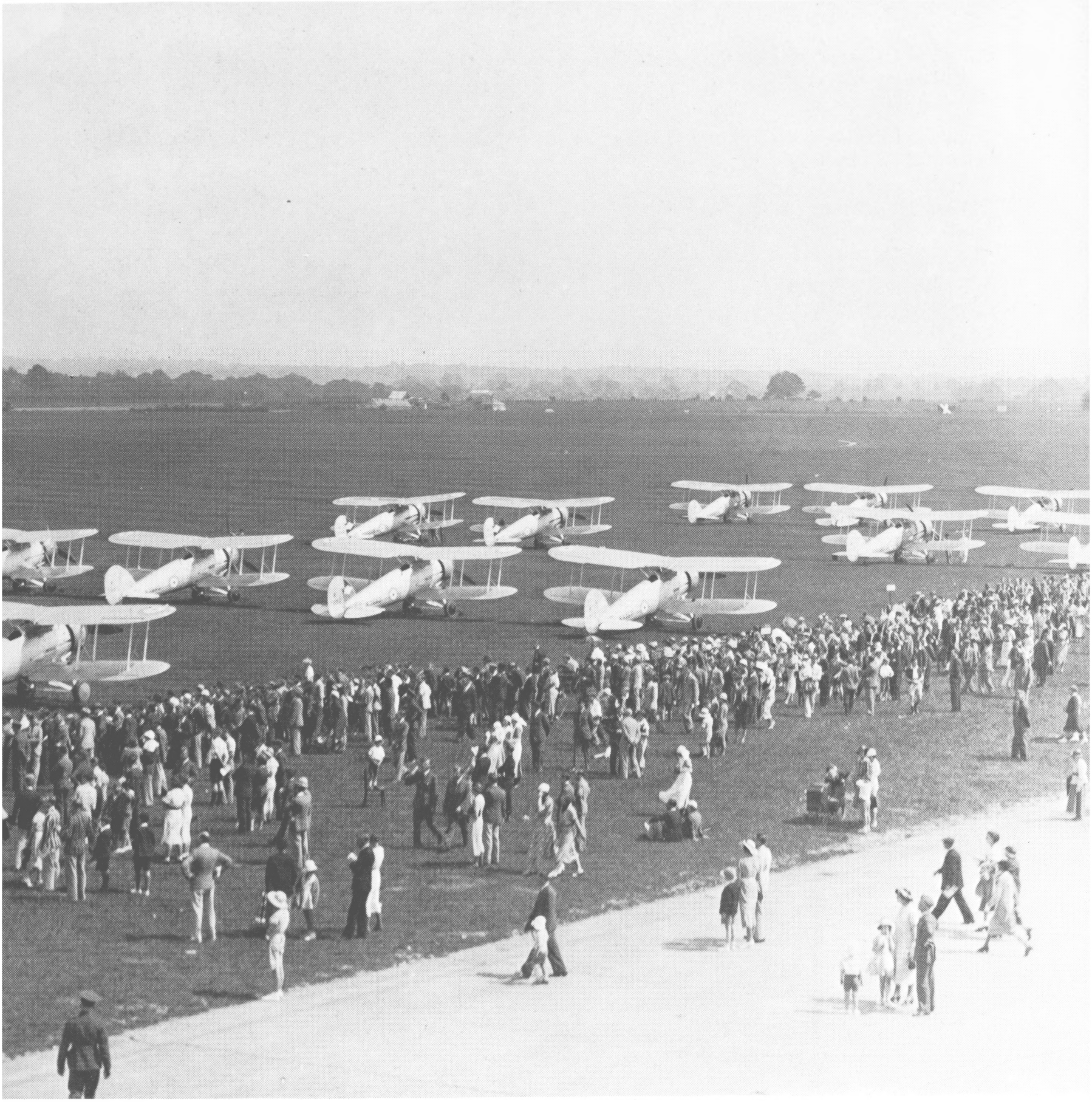


▲ **66**
The airship *Graf Zeppelin* landing at Hanworth in 1931. The British airship R101 had burst into flames at Beauvais on a test flight to India in 1930, killing 48 people. The Germans operated a trans- atlantic airship service from 1936 until the *Hindenburg* was destroyed by fire on its maiden flight, May 1937. After this disaster attempts to develop airships were finally abandoned.

▼ **67**

Nannies and their charges on the banks of the Medway at Rochester, September 1937. The flying boat was one of the Empire Class, 'Cambria'. These aircraft flew the luxury overseas routes of Imperial Airways and were the forerunners of the Sunderland Flying Boats. The Short Bros. Aircraft Works were based at this spot from 1913 until they were moved to Belfast in 1947, having suffered heavily from war damage.

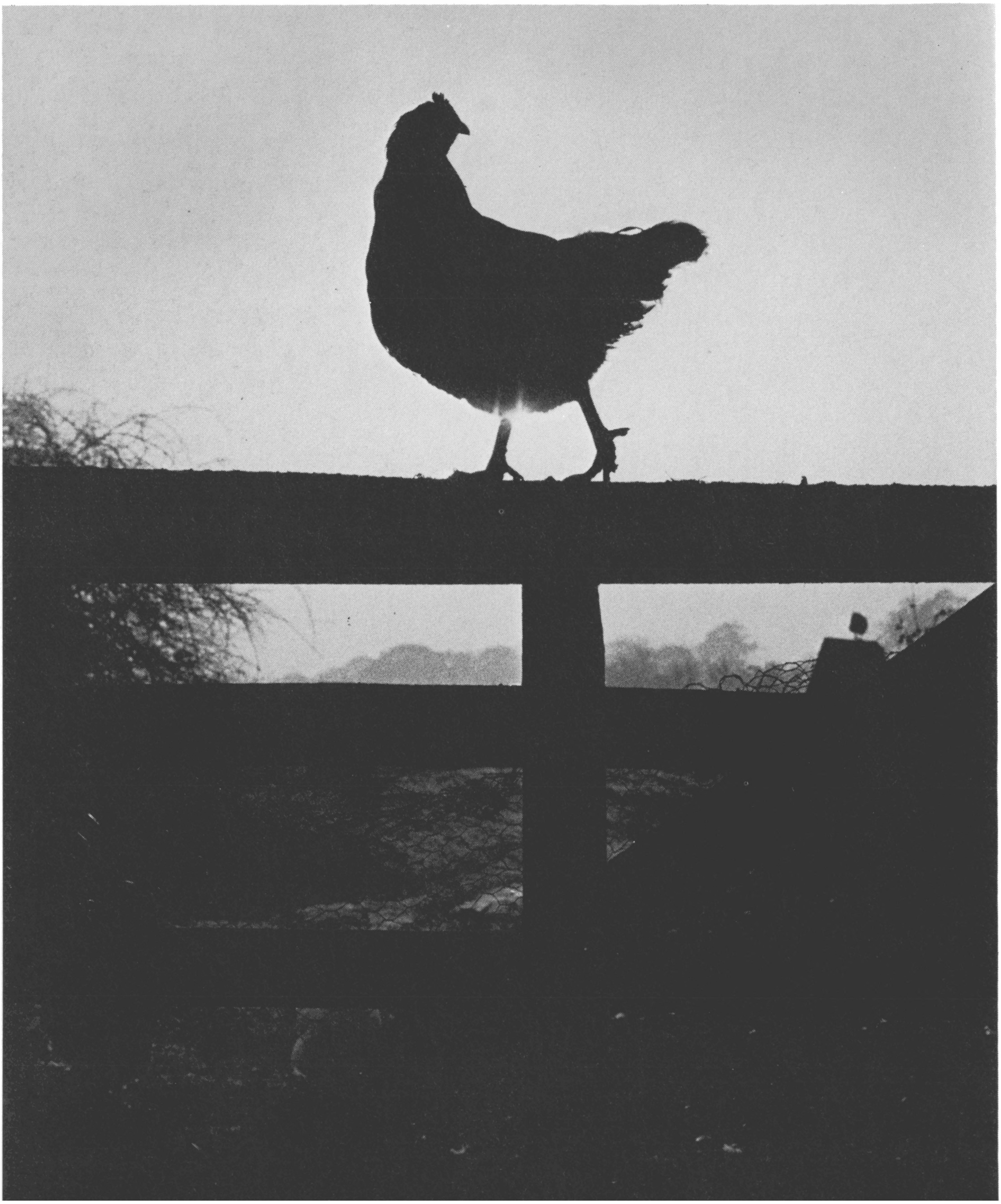


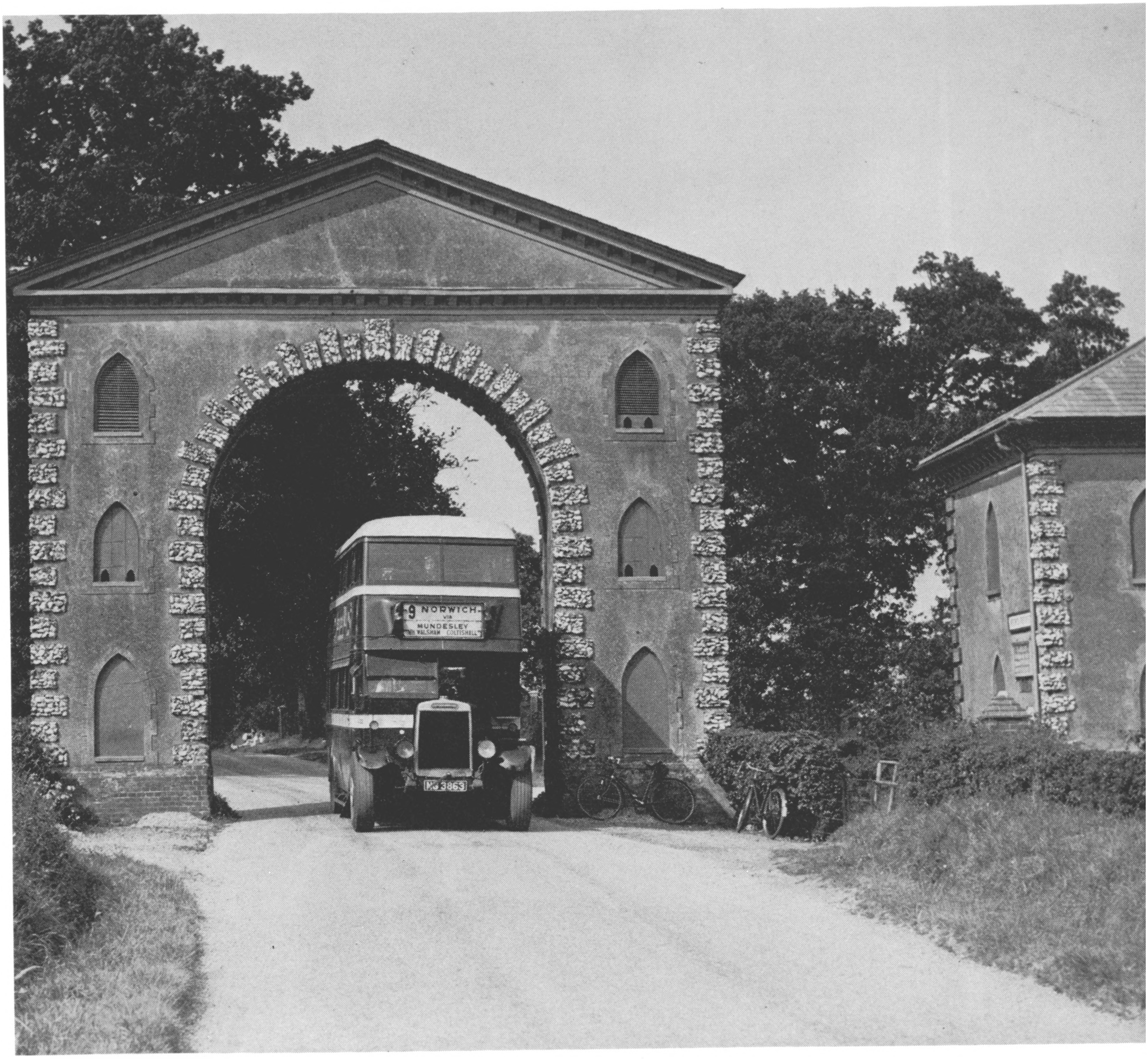


▲ **68**
Empire Air Day, Biggin Hill, 1937.

► **69**
Amy Johnson after a crash in 1936, when she was flying solo from Paris to London.

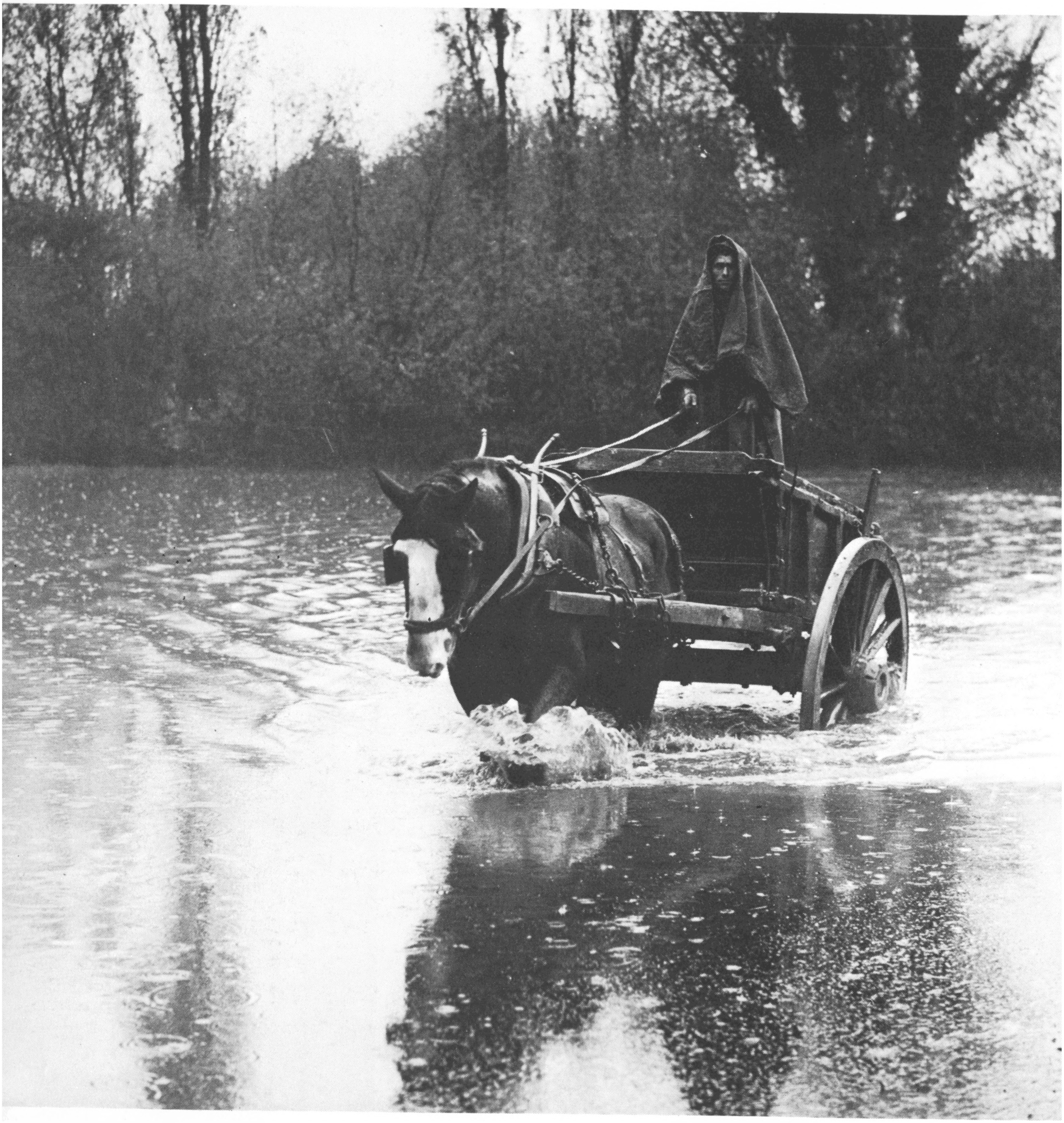
IN THE COUNTRY



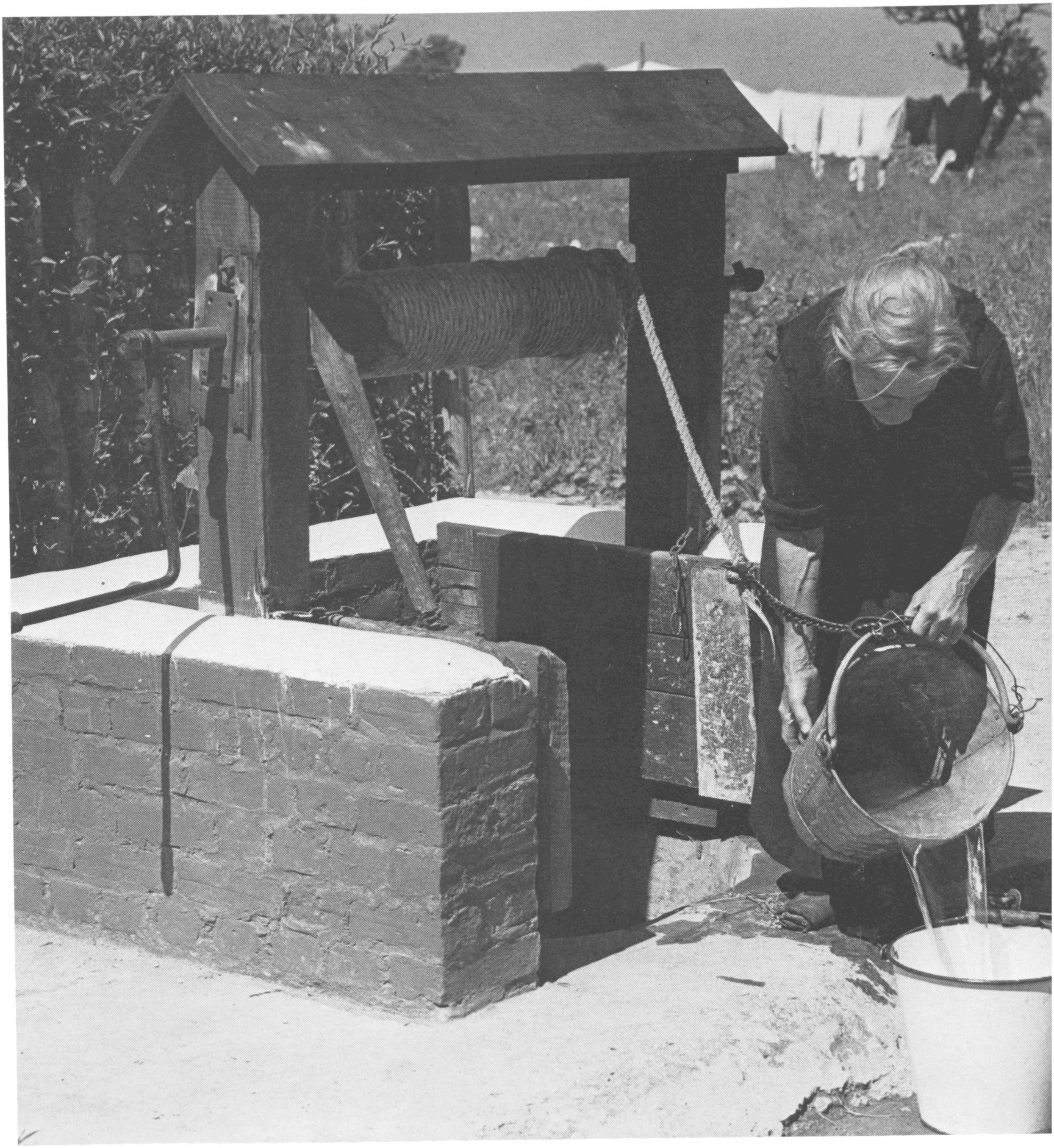

9 NORWICH
VIA
MUNDESLEY
N. WALSHAM COLTISHALL
MG 3863

◀ **70**
Hens still scratched around the farmyards and country people still woke to the sound of cocks crowing.

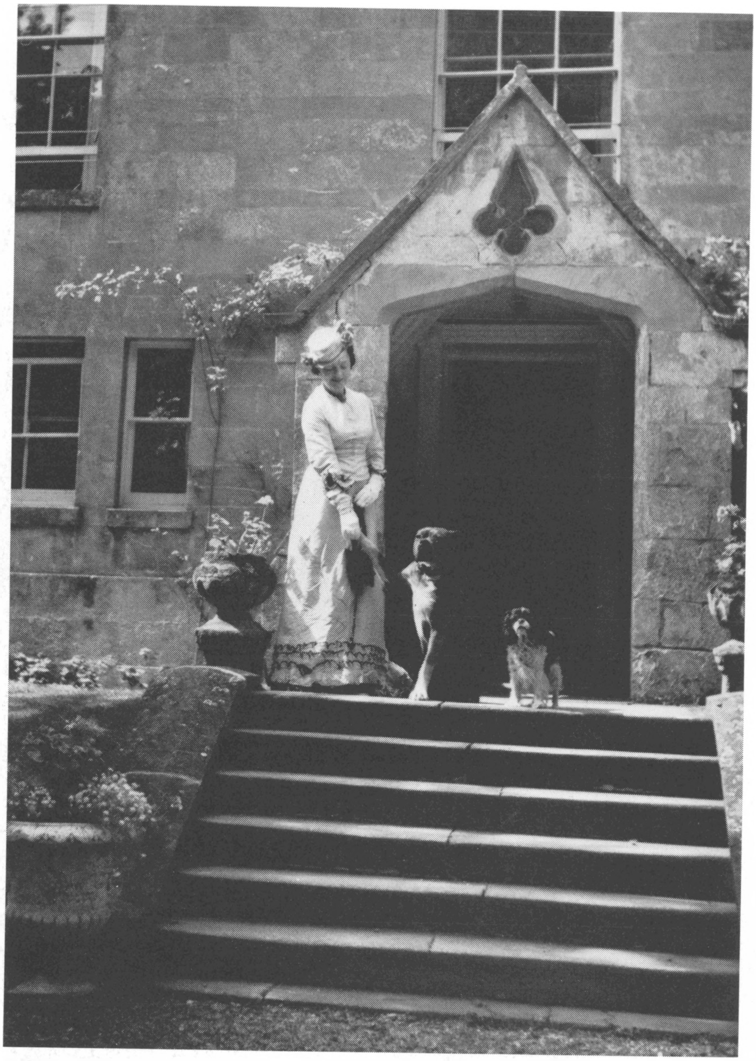
▲ **71**
Once the entrance to a stately home, this archway spanned the Norwich–Aylsham road. The lodge beside it had been converted into a post office.



▲ **72**
A farm labourer in Orpington, 1935, driving his cart into the water to swell the wood and thus tighten the wheels.

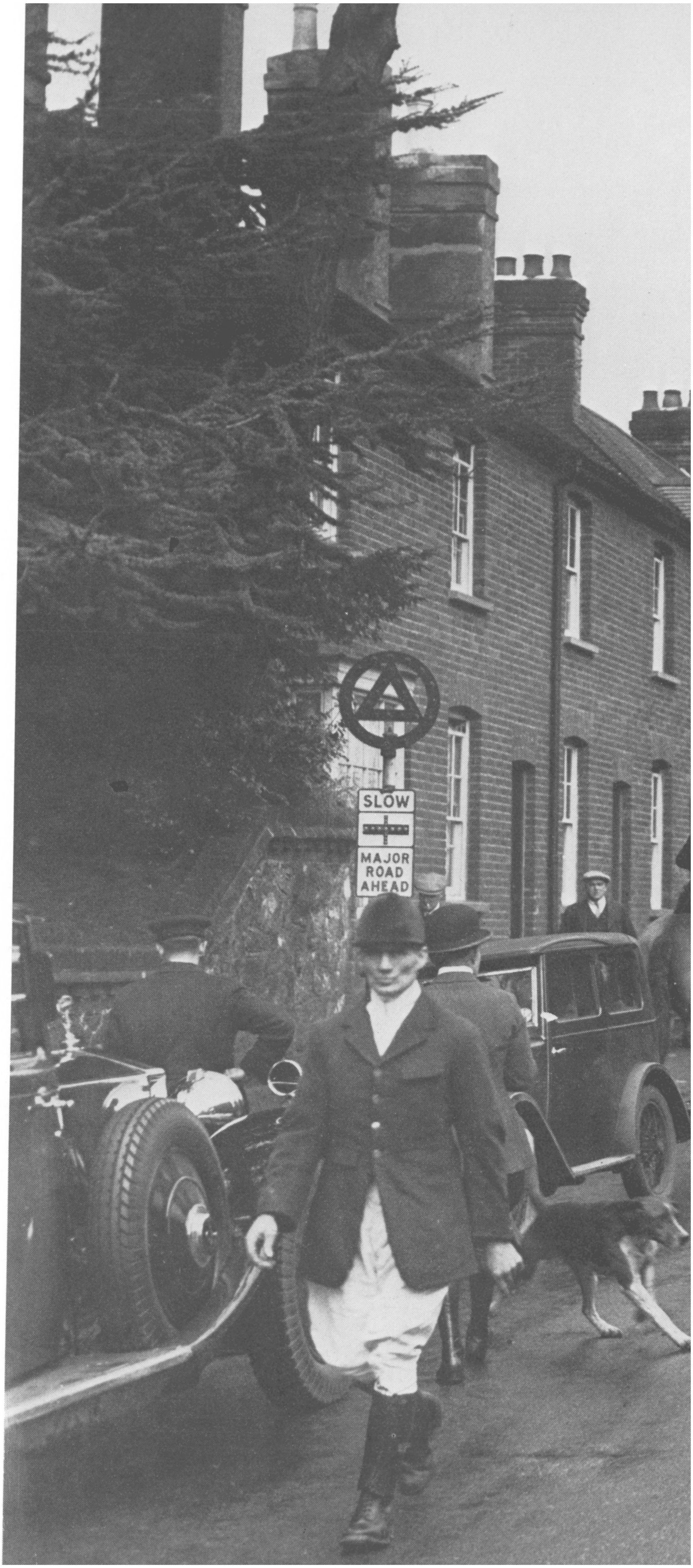


▲ **73**
This well was the only source of water for the Kentish village of Dean Bottom in 1939.



▲ **74**
The lady of the manor: Mrs Sacheverell Sitwell at her house near Towcester in Northamptonshire.

▶ **75**
A country gamekeeper, dressed in breeches and leather gaiters, with his ‘gibbet’. These macabre displays of destroyed vermin and predators were once a common sight. Behind the keeper can be seen his coops for pheasant-rearing.

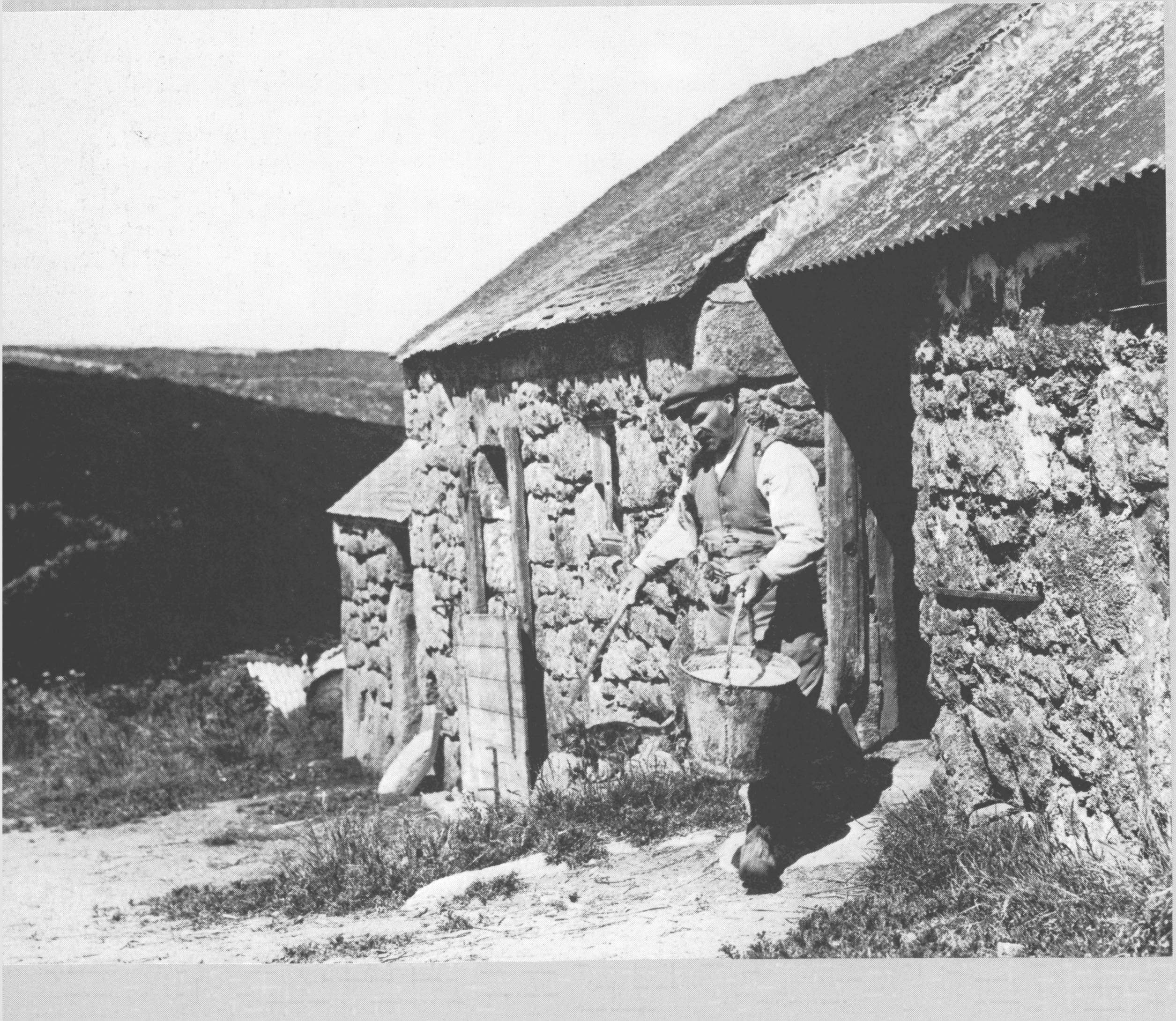


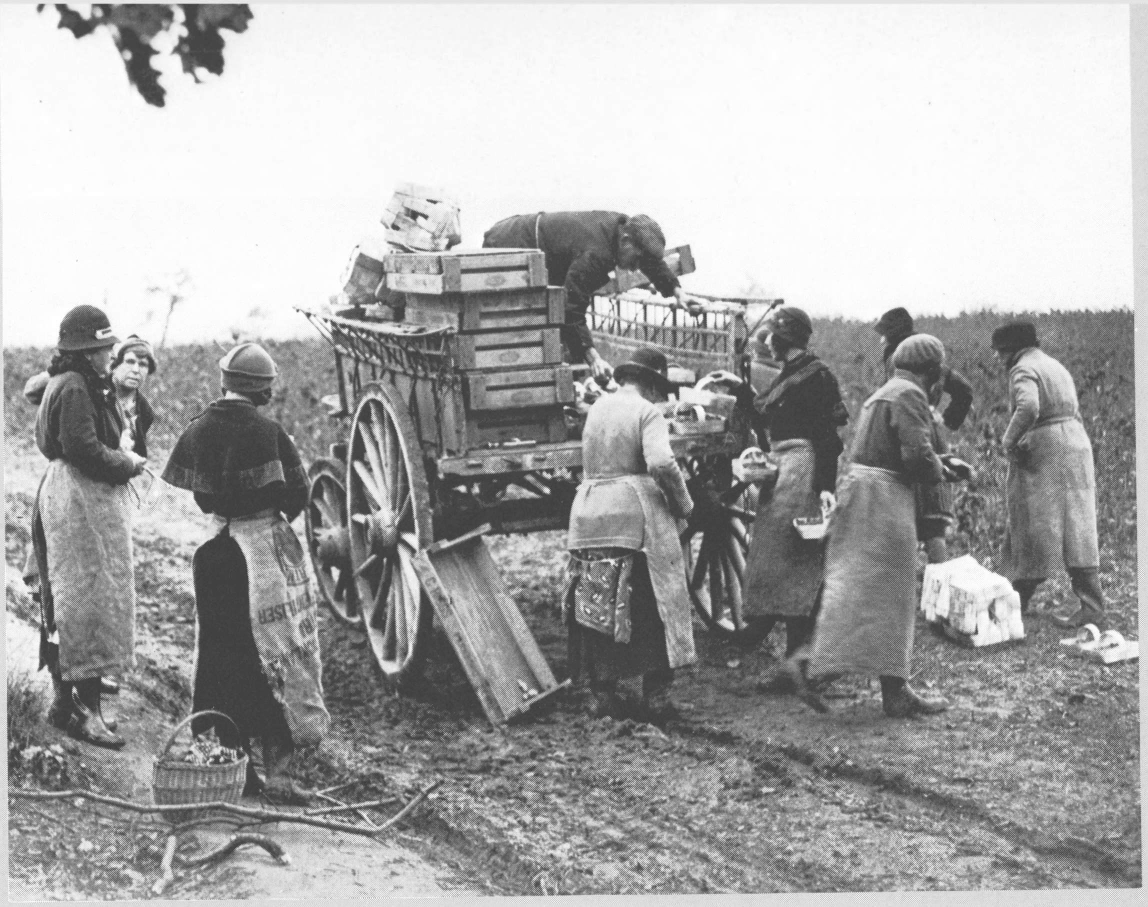
76
The hunt moving off down Bletchingley's village street, 1936. At this date rides were kept open by landlords and farmers, who often hunted themselves, while hedges had not yet been replaced by barbed wire to any great extent.

UV 5289

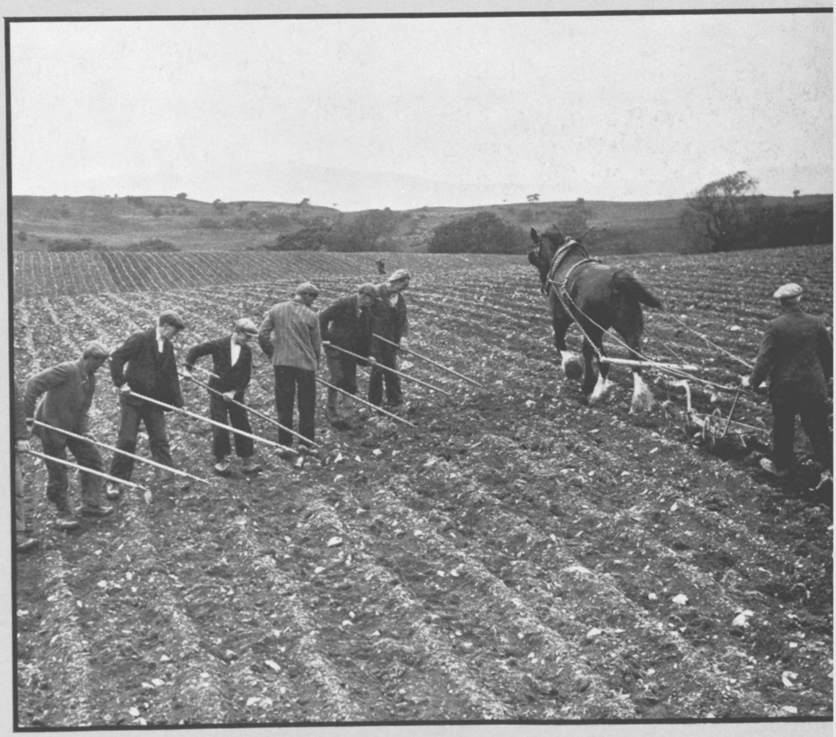
▼ **77**
A hill-farmer bringing out a bucket of pig swill, Cornwall 1936. The thirties were a bad time for English agriculture; many writers commented on the tumbledown buildings and derelict, weed-infested fields.

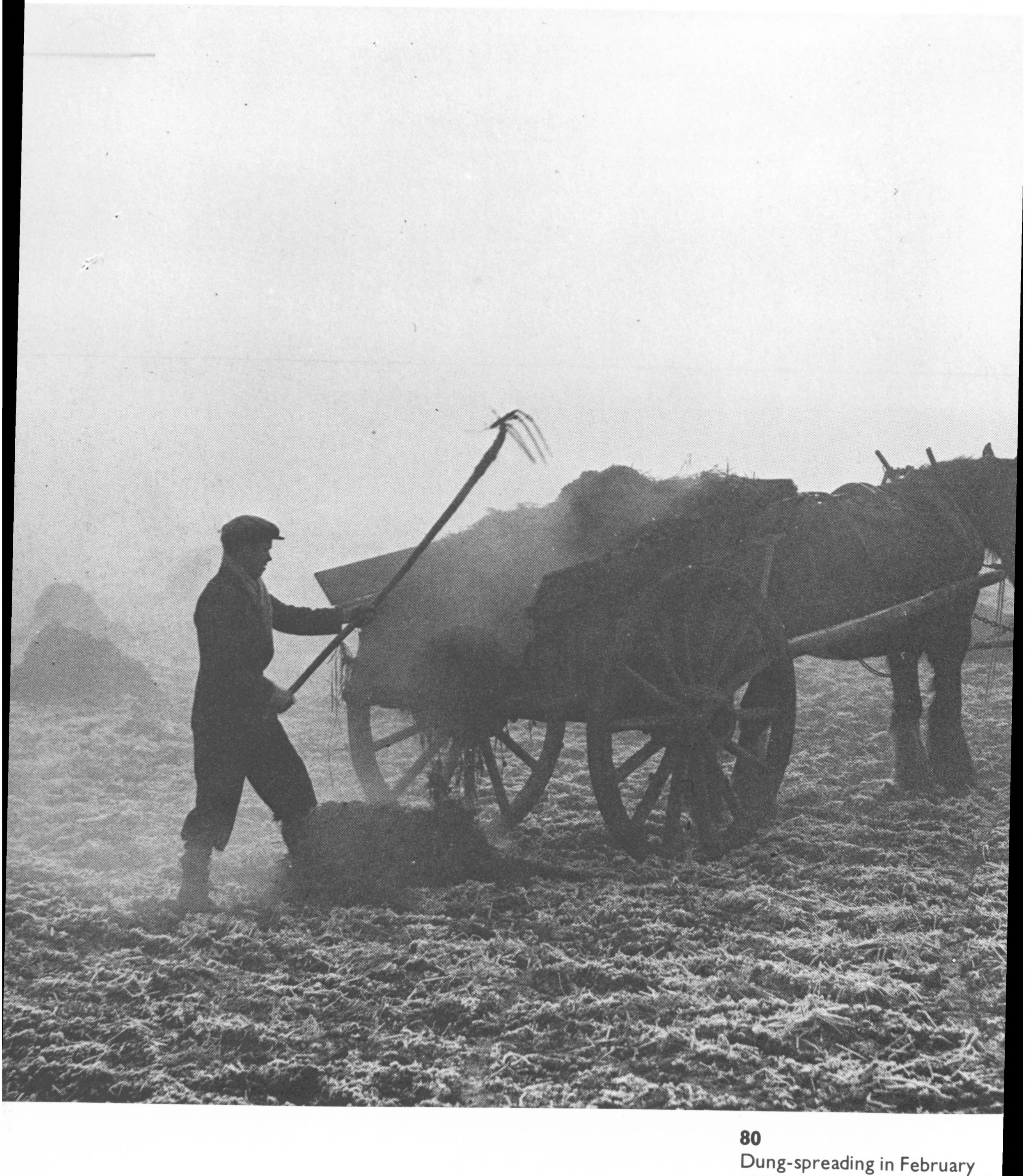
► **78**
Farming, still largely unmechanized, had a large labour force. Some work was seasonal; these women were picking raspberries for 'The Christmas Trade' 1934.



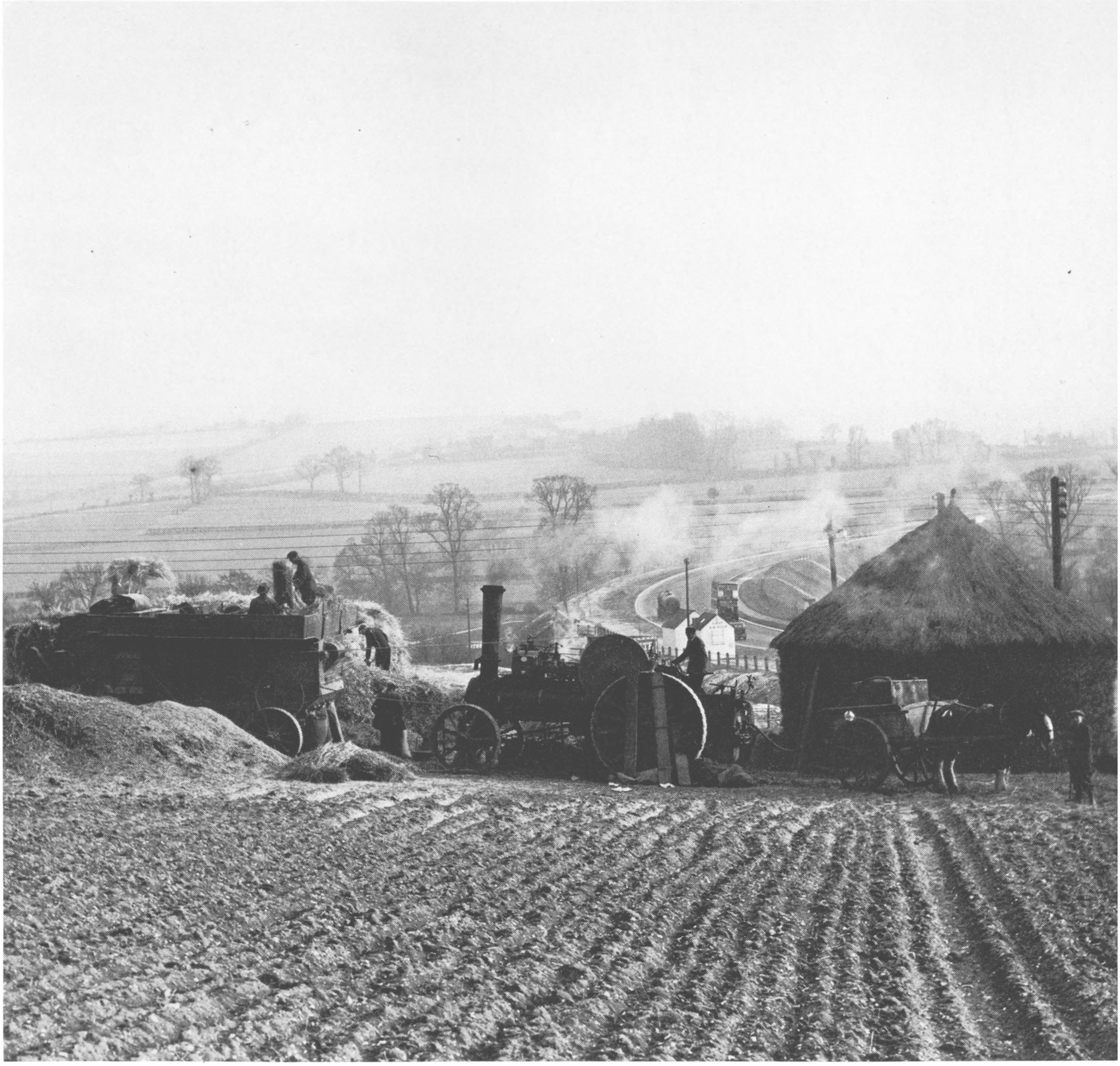


► **79**
Hoeing turnips in
Kirkcudbrightshire,
Scotland, 1933.





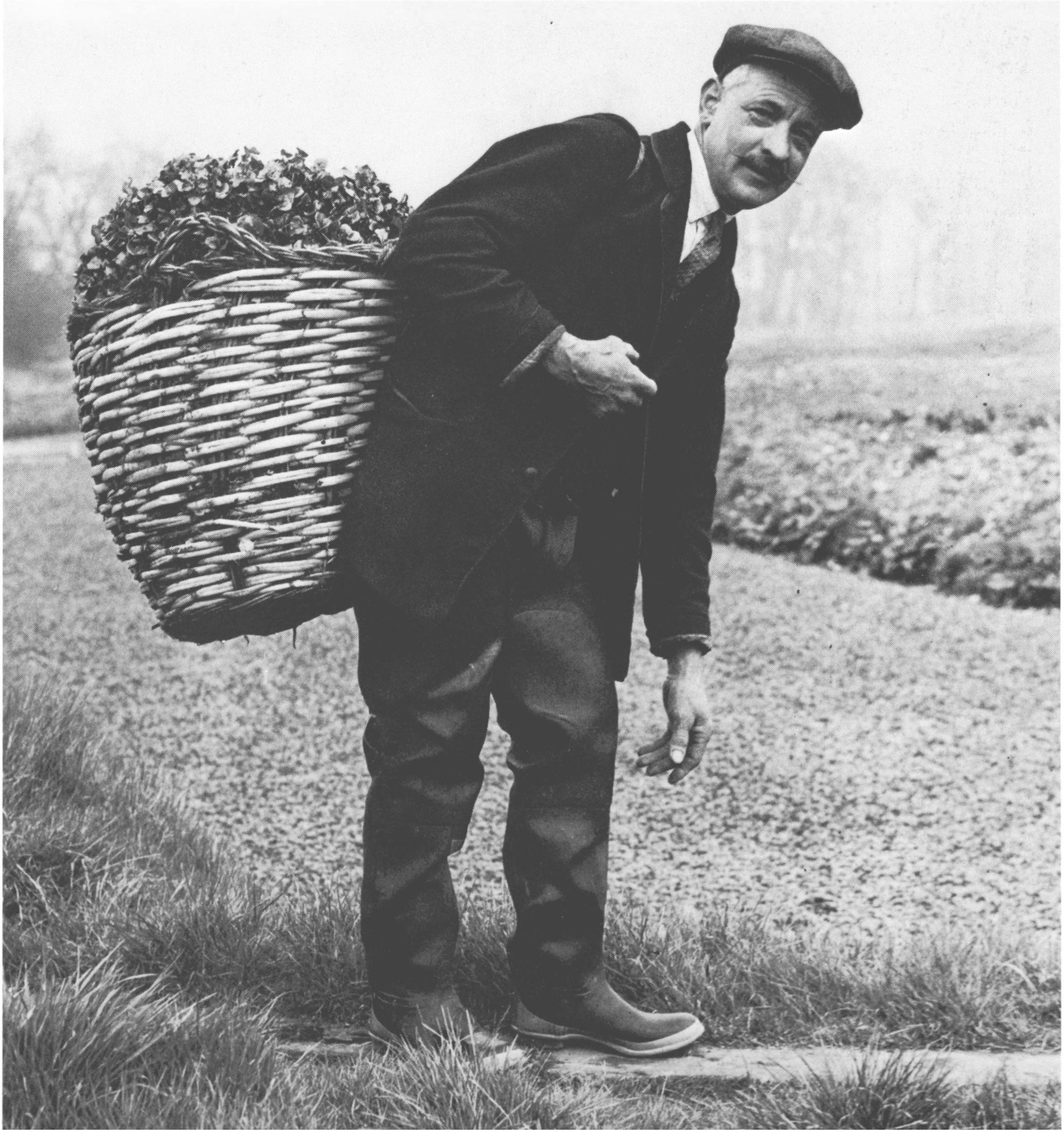
80
Dung-spreading in February 1939.

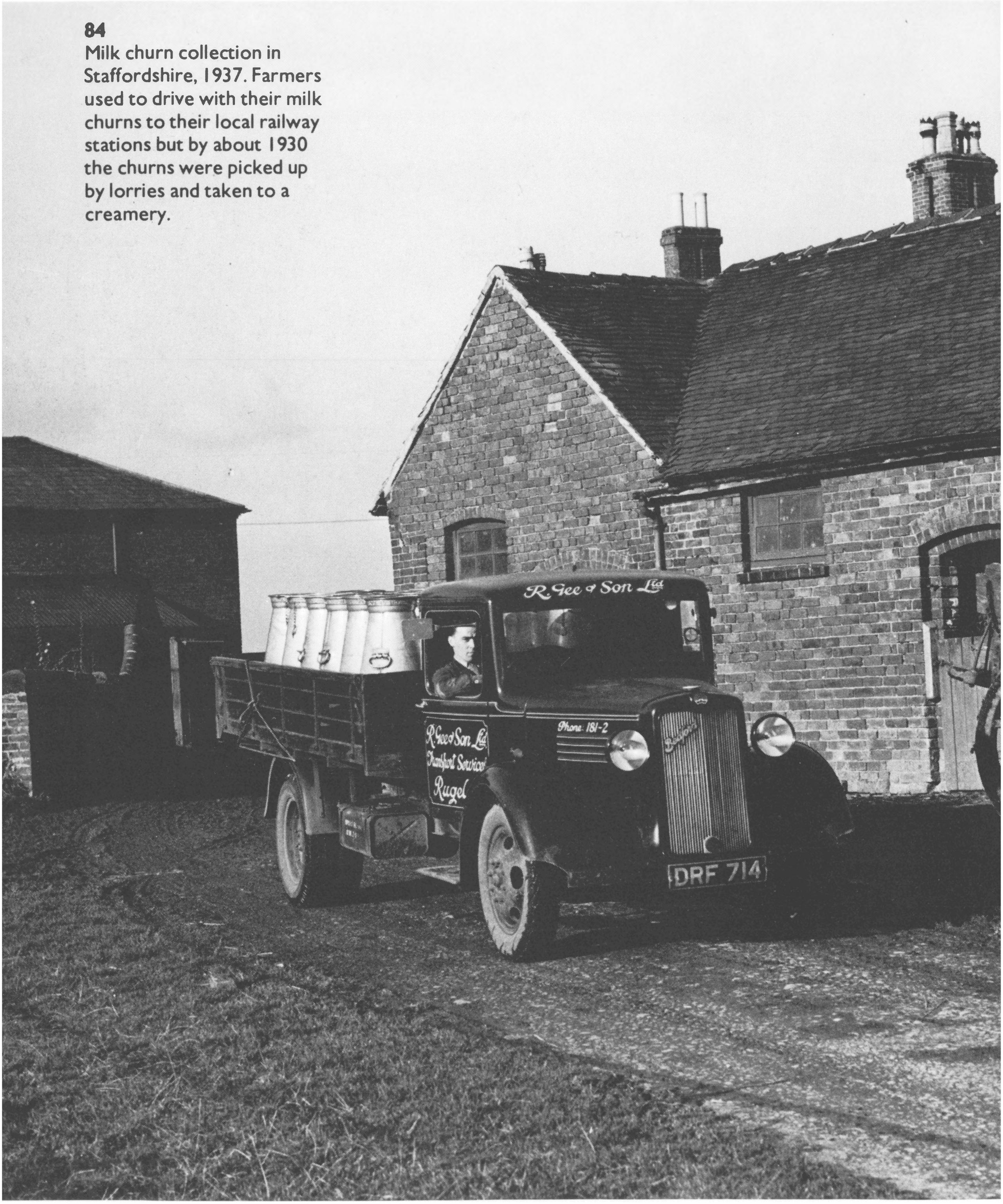


81
Steam threshing-machines travelled from farm to farm. Water for the engine was brought from the nearest pond by horse and cart. The carefully built cornstacks were dismantled as sheaf after sheaf was passed into the machine. Threshing was a winter job; this photograph was taken in February 1936.

◀ **82**
Lambing time 1935. Shepherds camped by their flocks; many used Old English sheepdogs.

▼ **83**
A watercress grower, wearing rubber waders, 1938. Rubber boots contributed perhaps more than anything else to the comfort of country workers.

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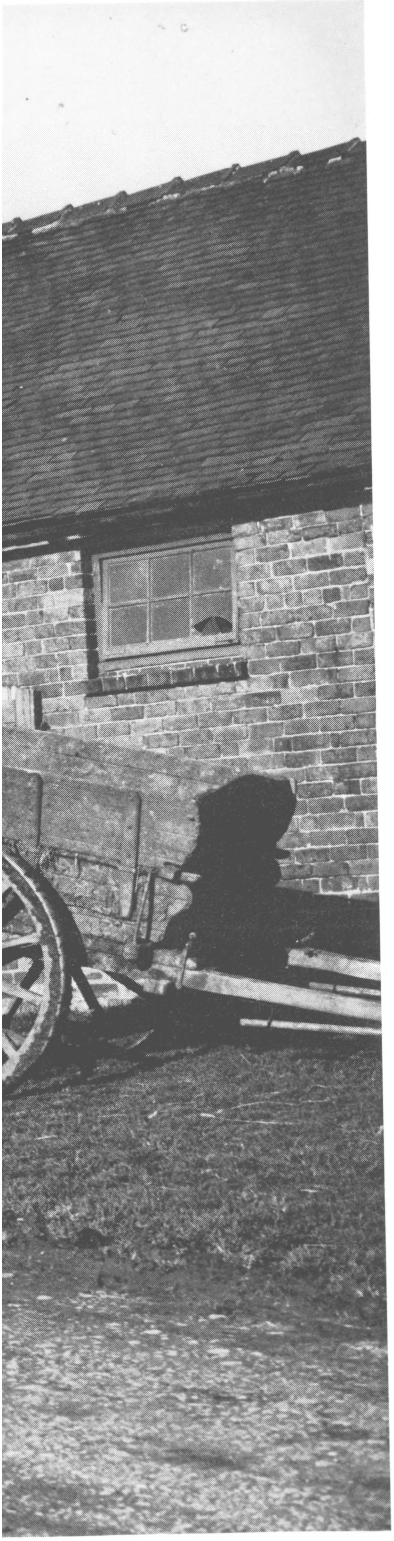
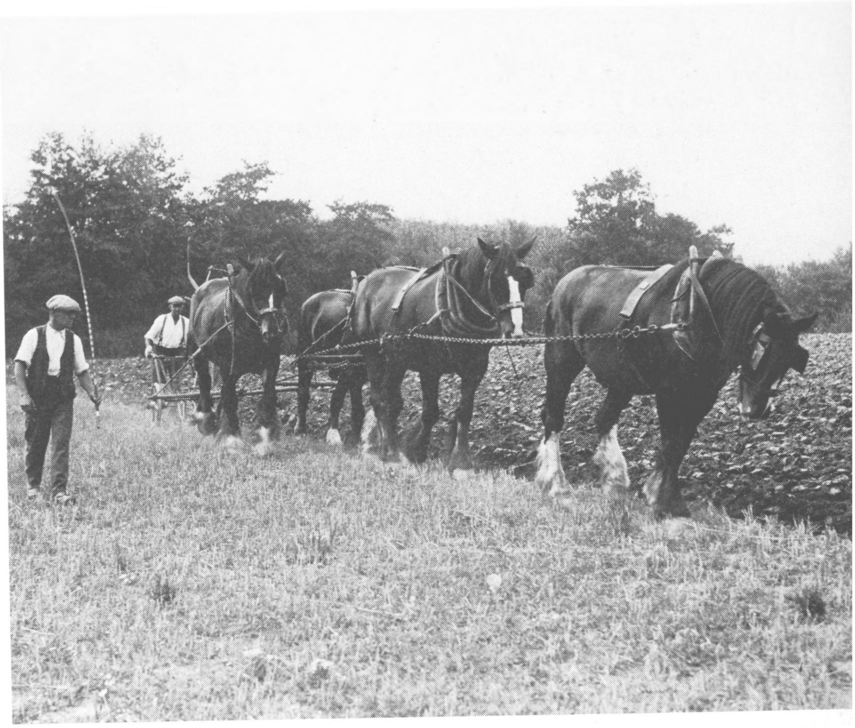
R. Gee & Son Ltd
Transport Services
Rugel
DRF 714

84

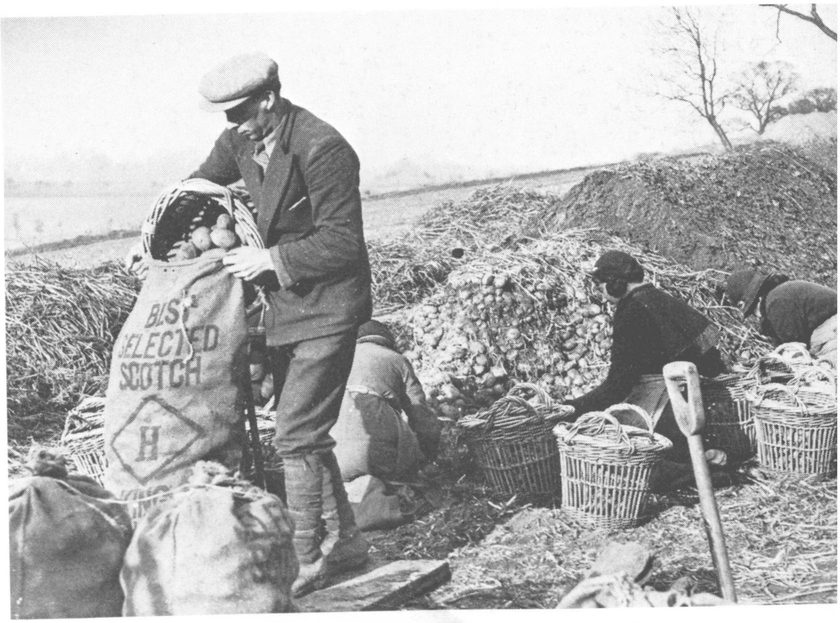
Milk churn collection in Staffordshire, 1937. Farmers used to drive with their milk churns to their local railway stations but by about 1930 the churns were picked up by lorries and taken to a creamery.





▲ **85**
Ploughing in 1937.

▼ **86**
Bagging up potatoes from a vast clamp. Scotland 1939.


BEST SELECTED SCOTCH
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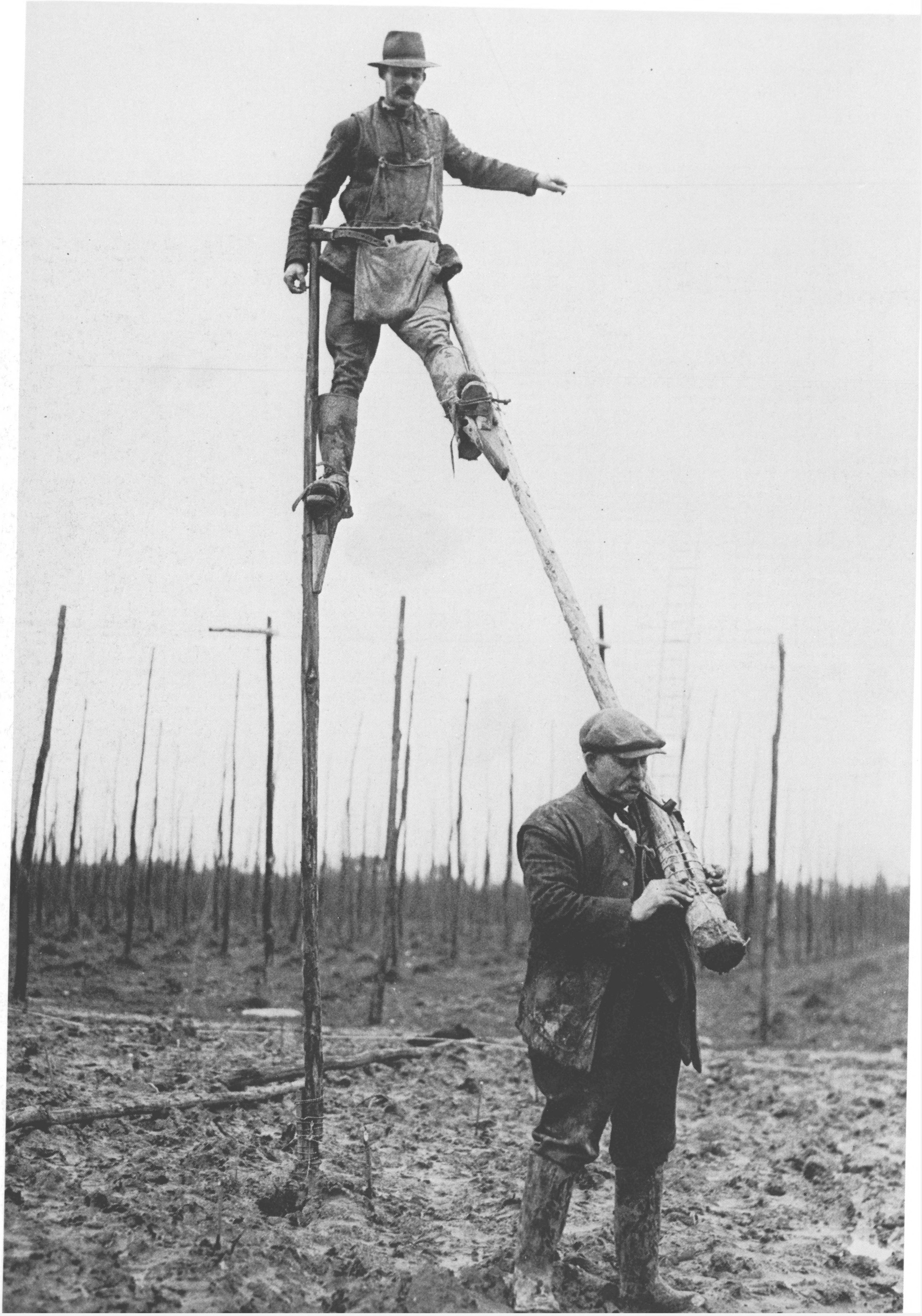
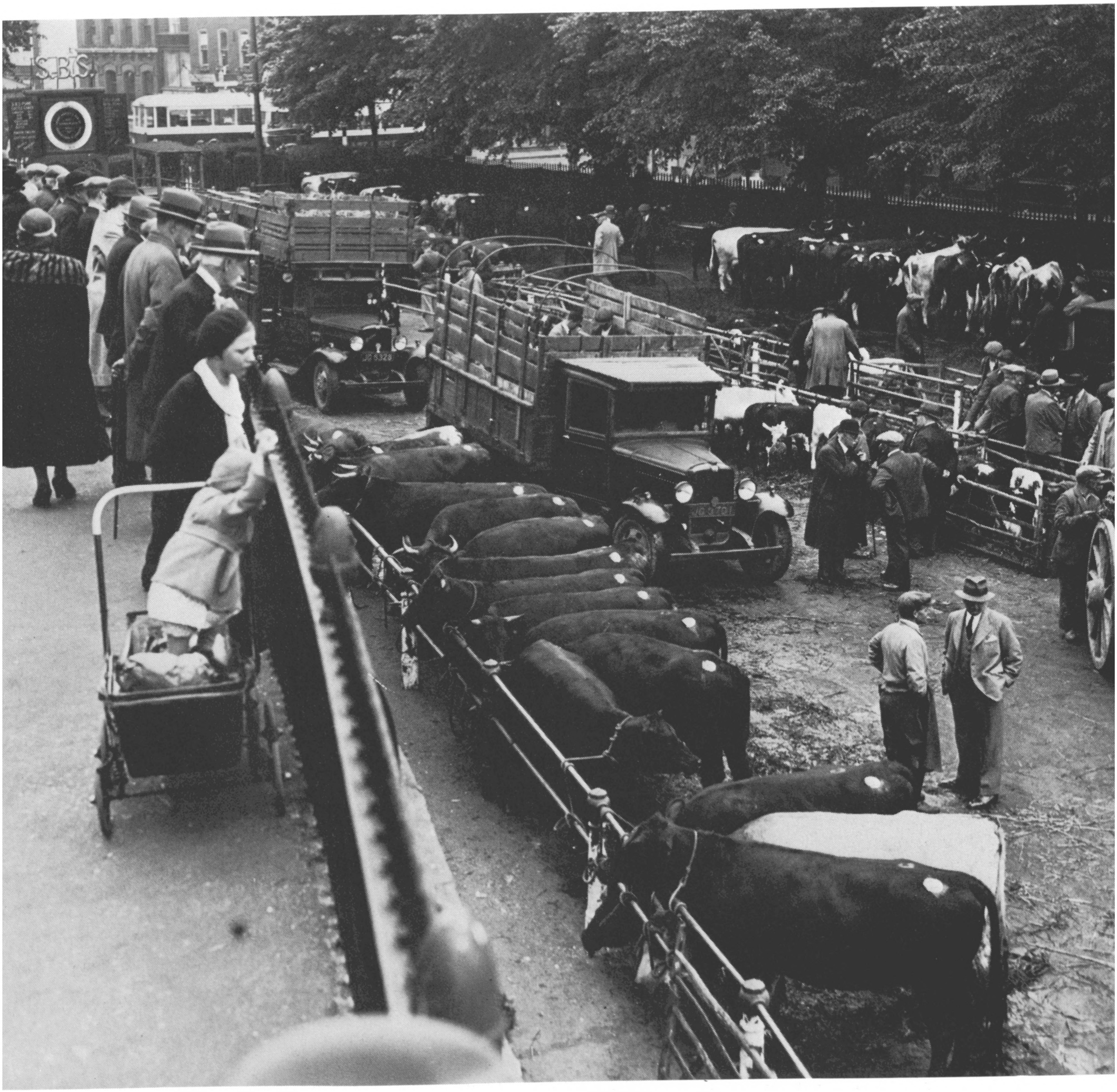


◀ **87**
Skilled men walked the hopfields on huge stilts to string the hop poles. Kent, 1937.

▼ **88**
Canterbury cattle market in 1936 provided entertainment for free.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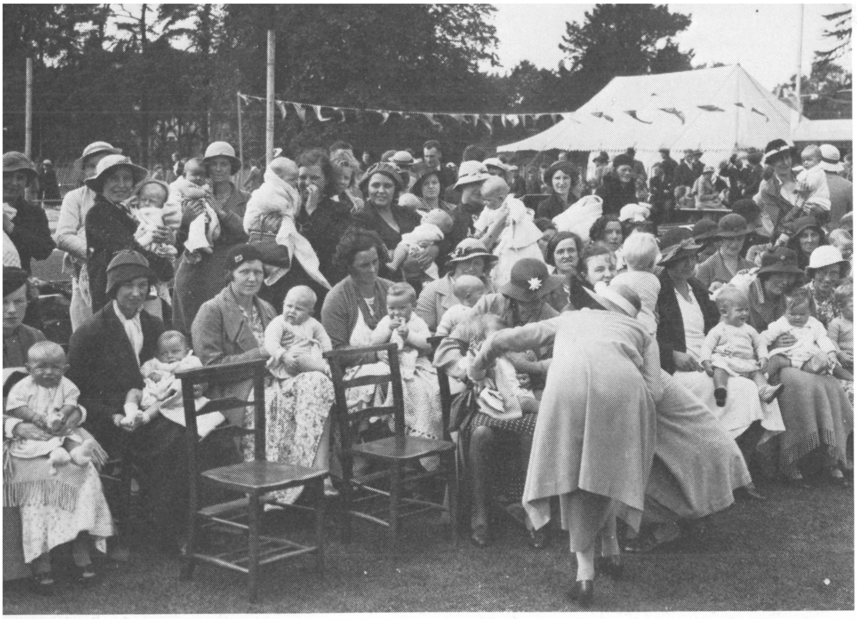
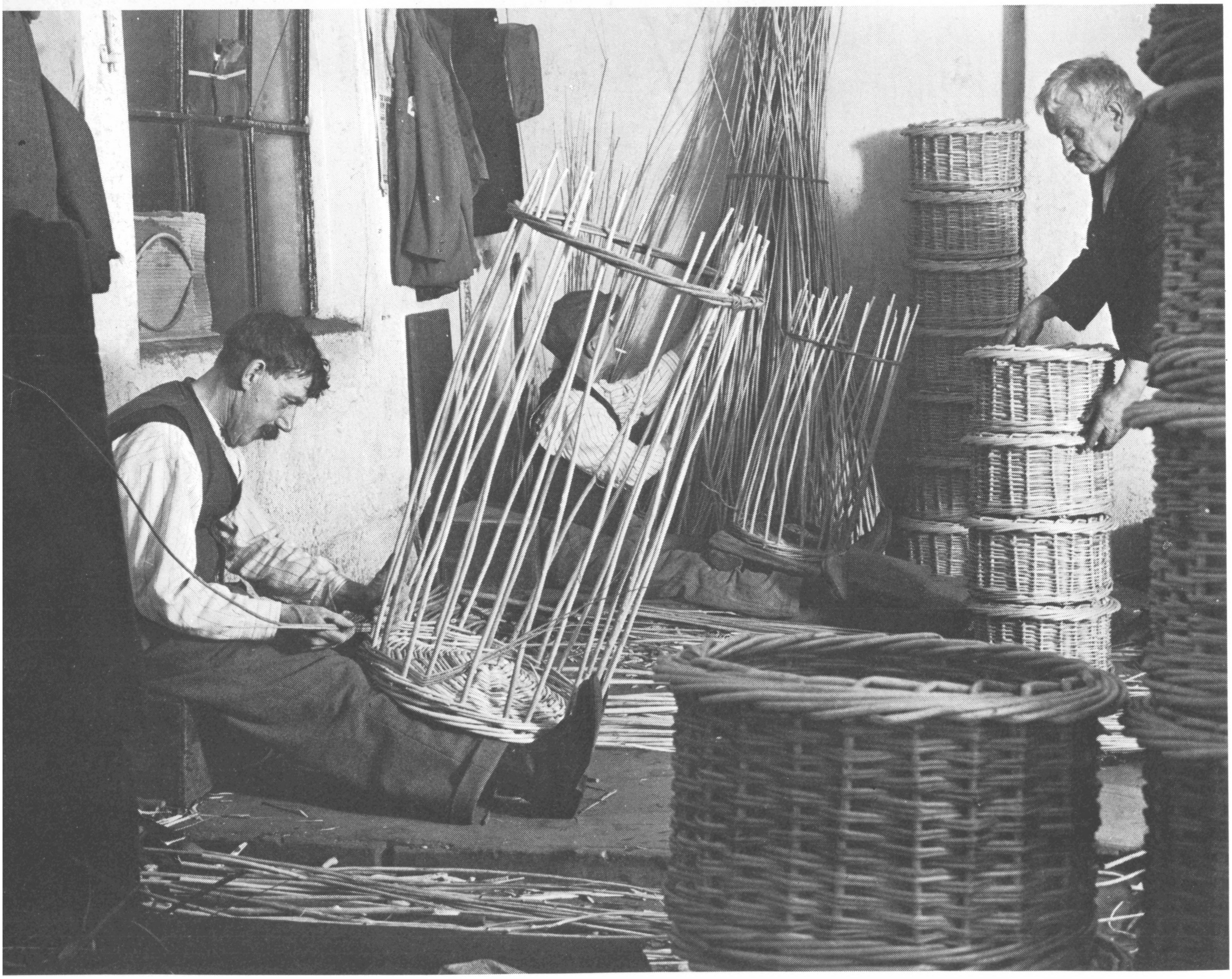


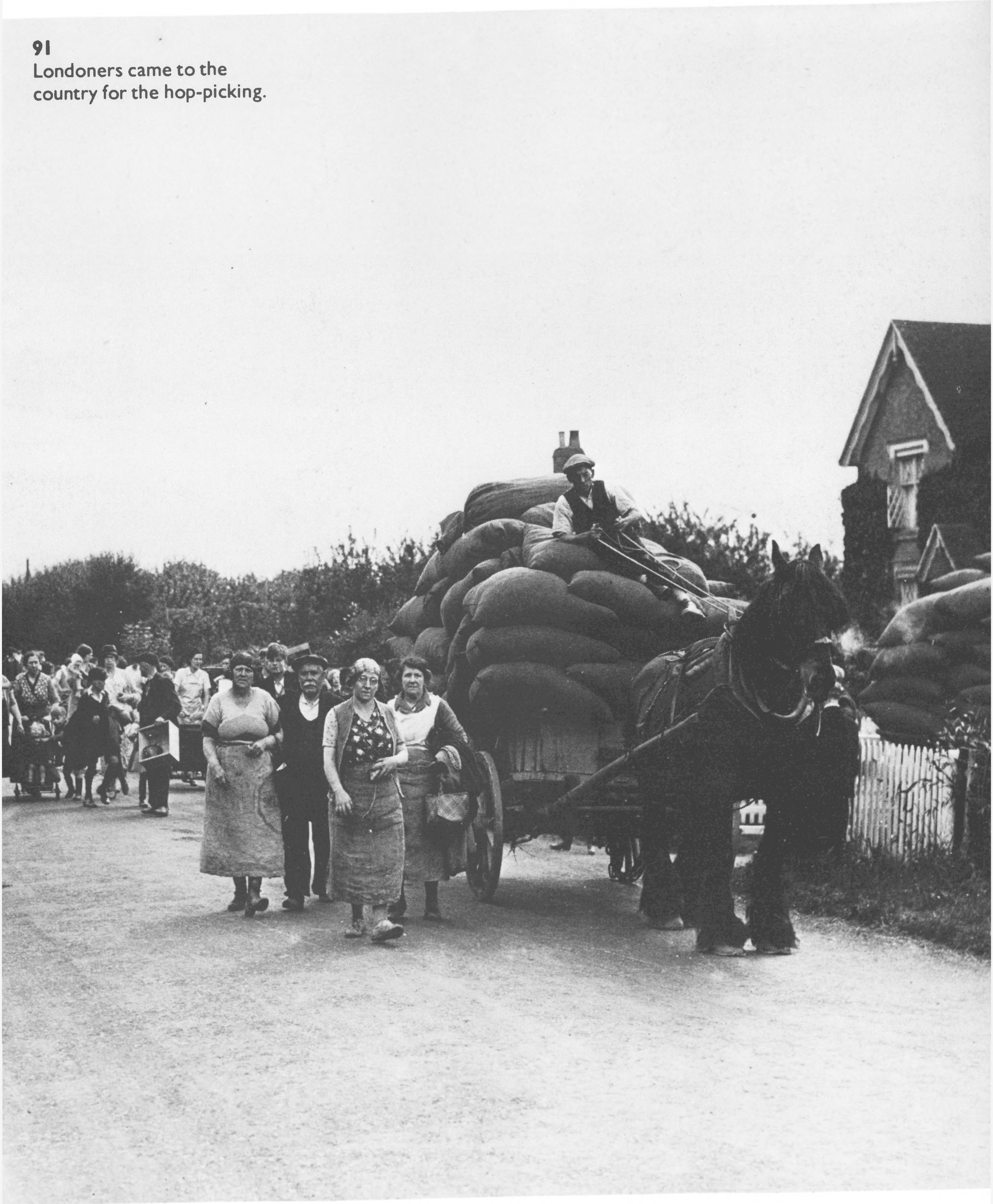
◀ **89**
A village baby show in 1936.

▼ **90**
Basket-makers at Swanley, 1936.



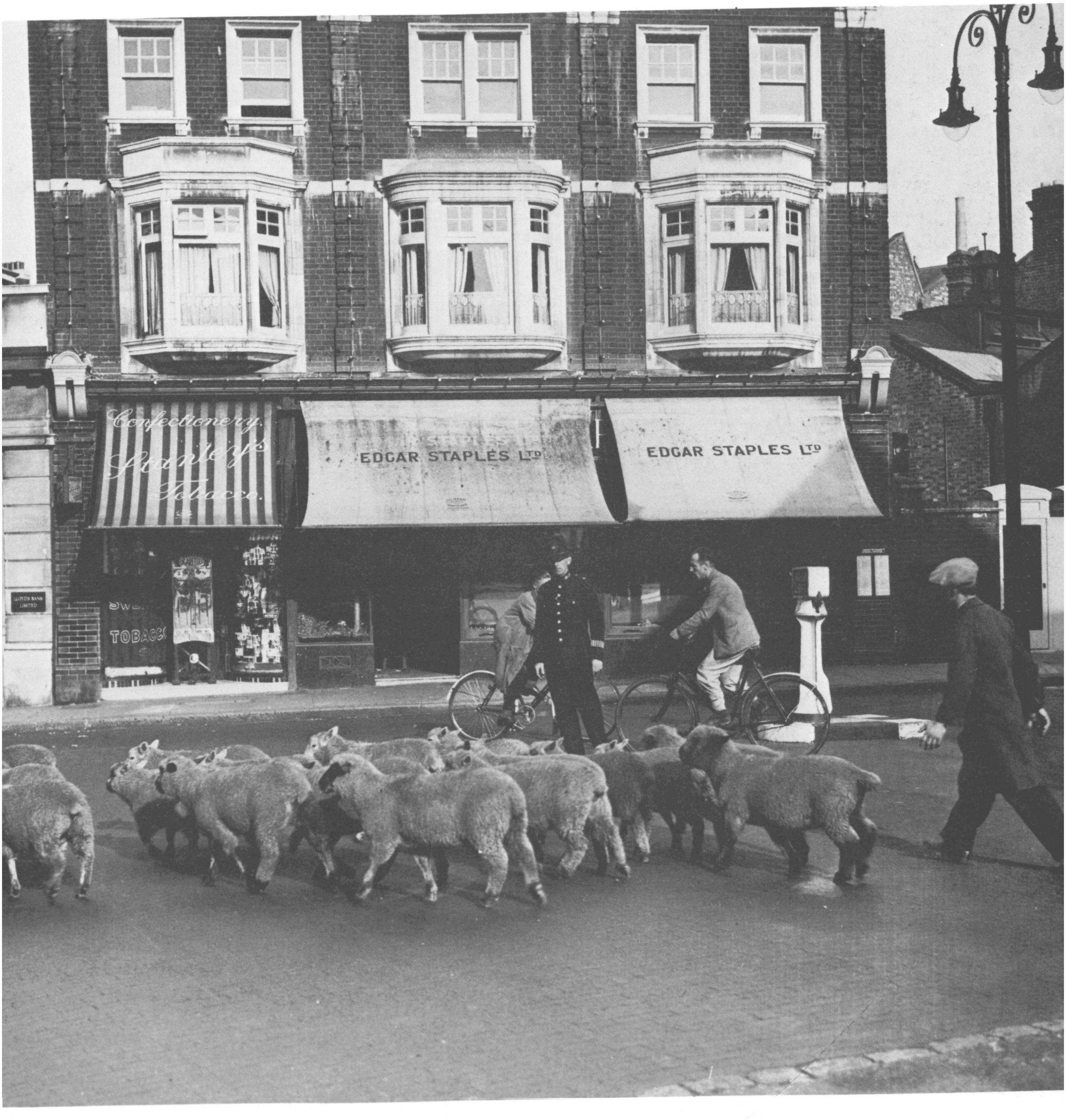
91

Londoners came to the country for the hop-picking.



◀ **92**
Hoppers' picnic in the hop garden.

▼ **93**
Fat lambs for the London market, July 1937.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EDGAR STAPLES LTD
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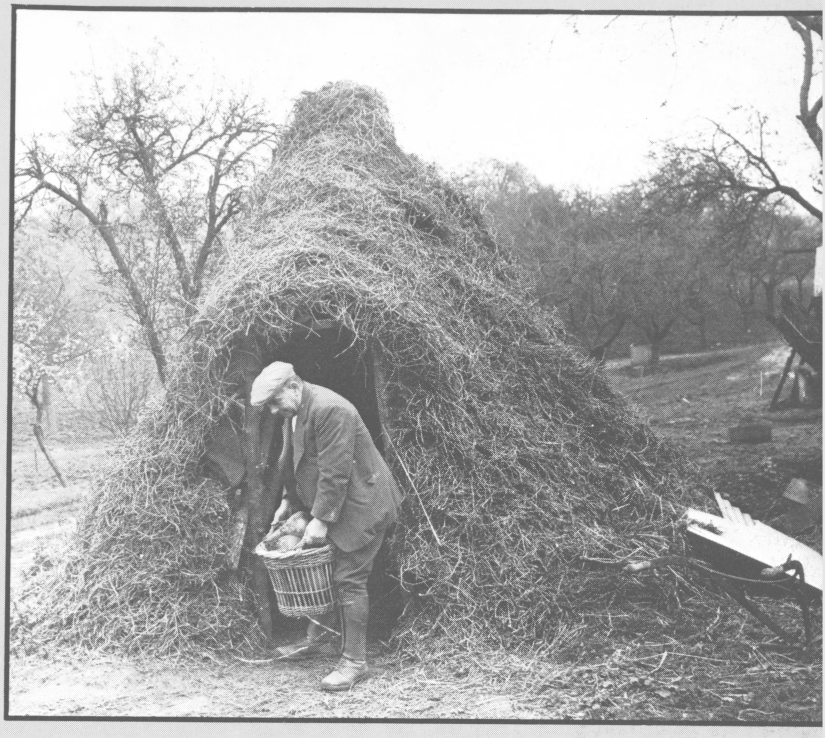
TOBACC

Poultry & Game.
H. Jones & Son
CAMDEN
TUNBRIDGE W



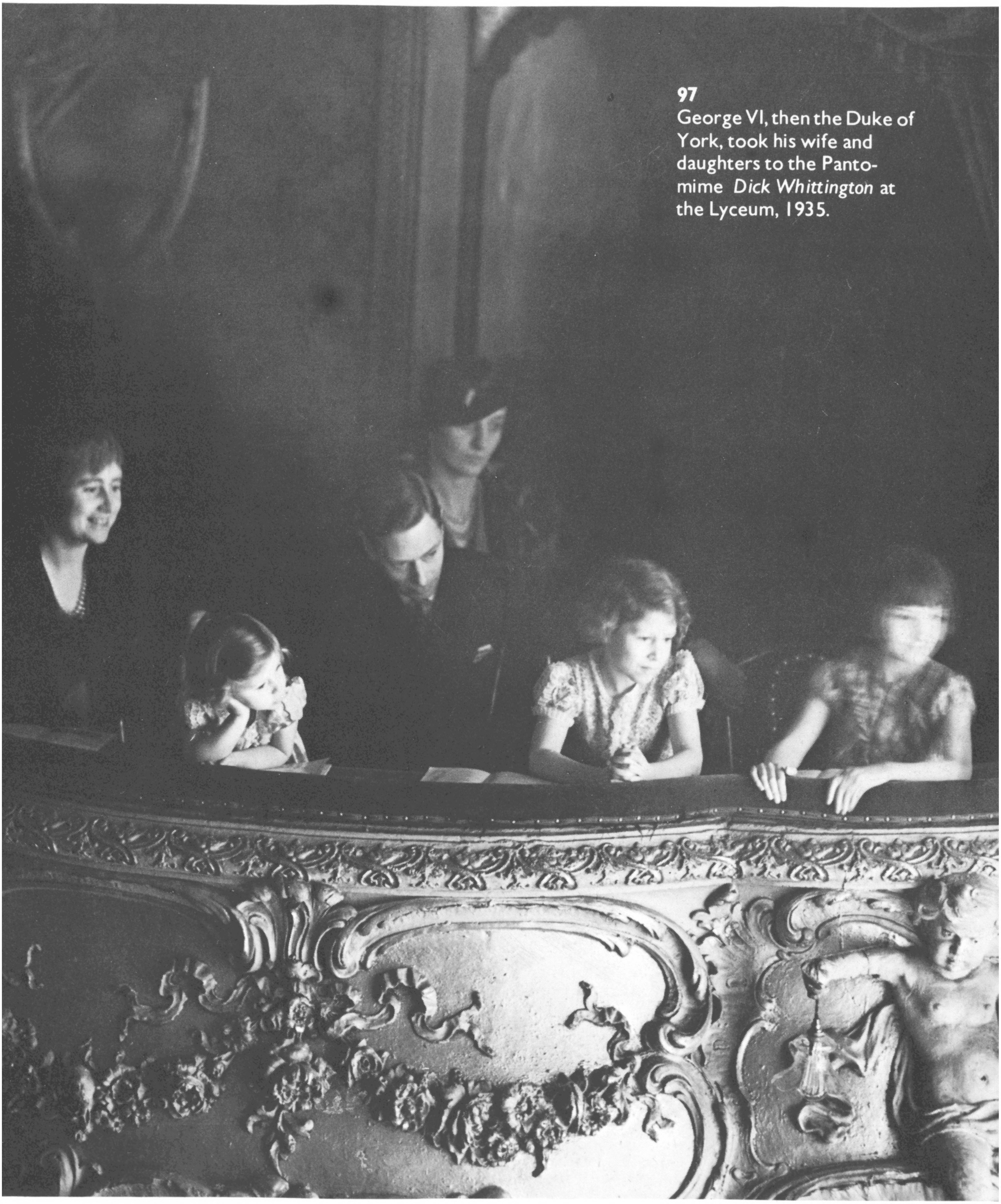
◀ **94**
A travelling tinker in 1937, with his goods in a battered perambulator.

▲ **95**
A charcoal burner's hut, 1935.

OFF DUTY

JUBILEE CINEMA
SWANSCOMBE'S SMALL BUT SUPER CINEMA
THE JUBILE INEMA
CINEMA
THE PUBLIC MENACE
FEATHER IN HER HAT

96
The cinema was at the peak of its popularity in the thirties; 40 per cent of the population went to the cinema once a week and 25 per cent went twice a week or more.



97
George VI, then the Duke of York, took his wife and daughters to the Pantomime *Dick Whittington* at the Lyceum, 1935.

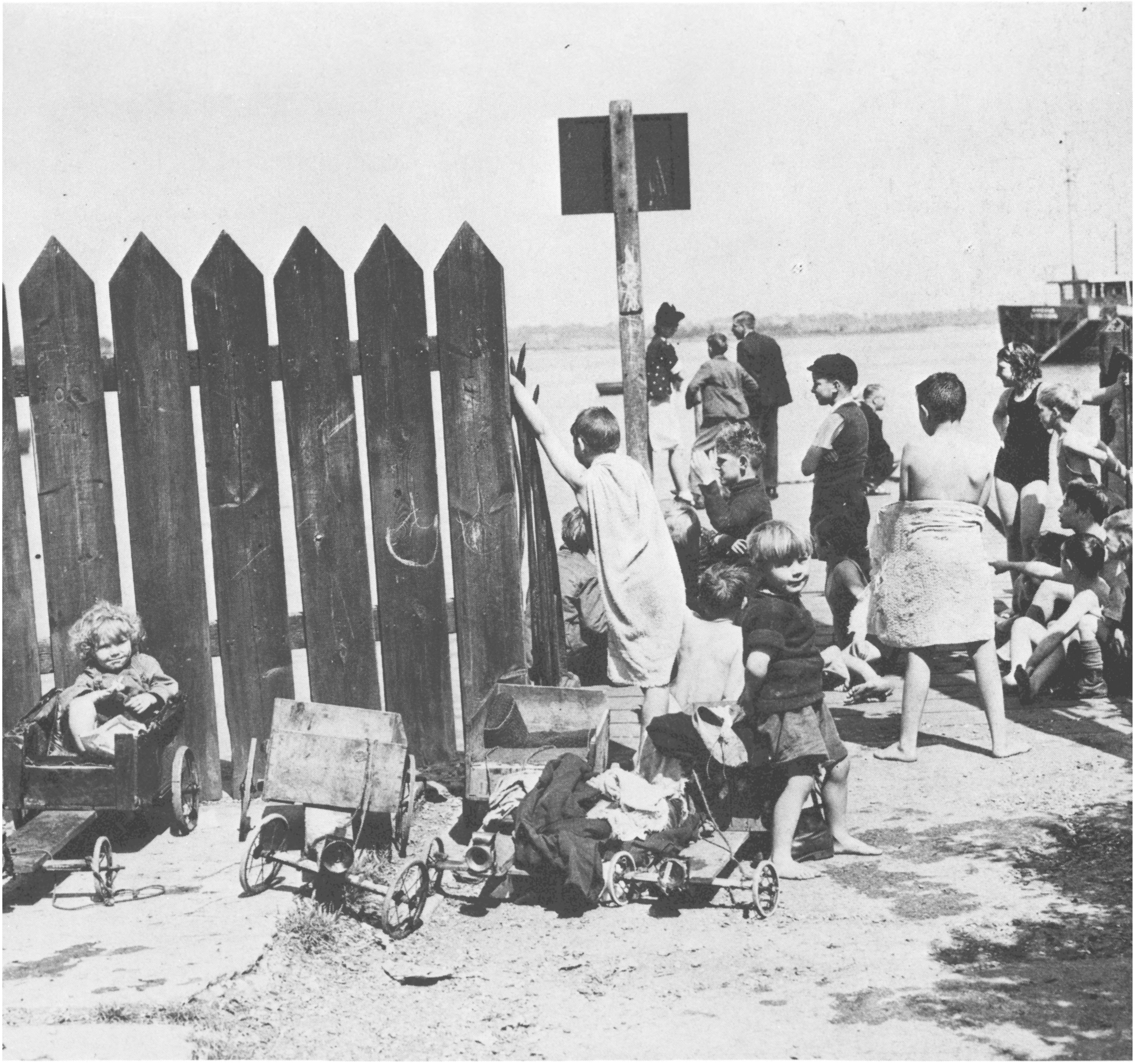
◀ **99**
Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers danced together in many films, including *The Gay Divorcee* and *Top Hat*. Their partnership followed a successful brother-sister dancing team which Fred and his sister Adèle maintained for twenty-five years, until 1932.

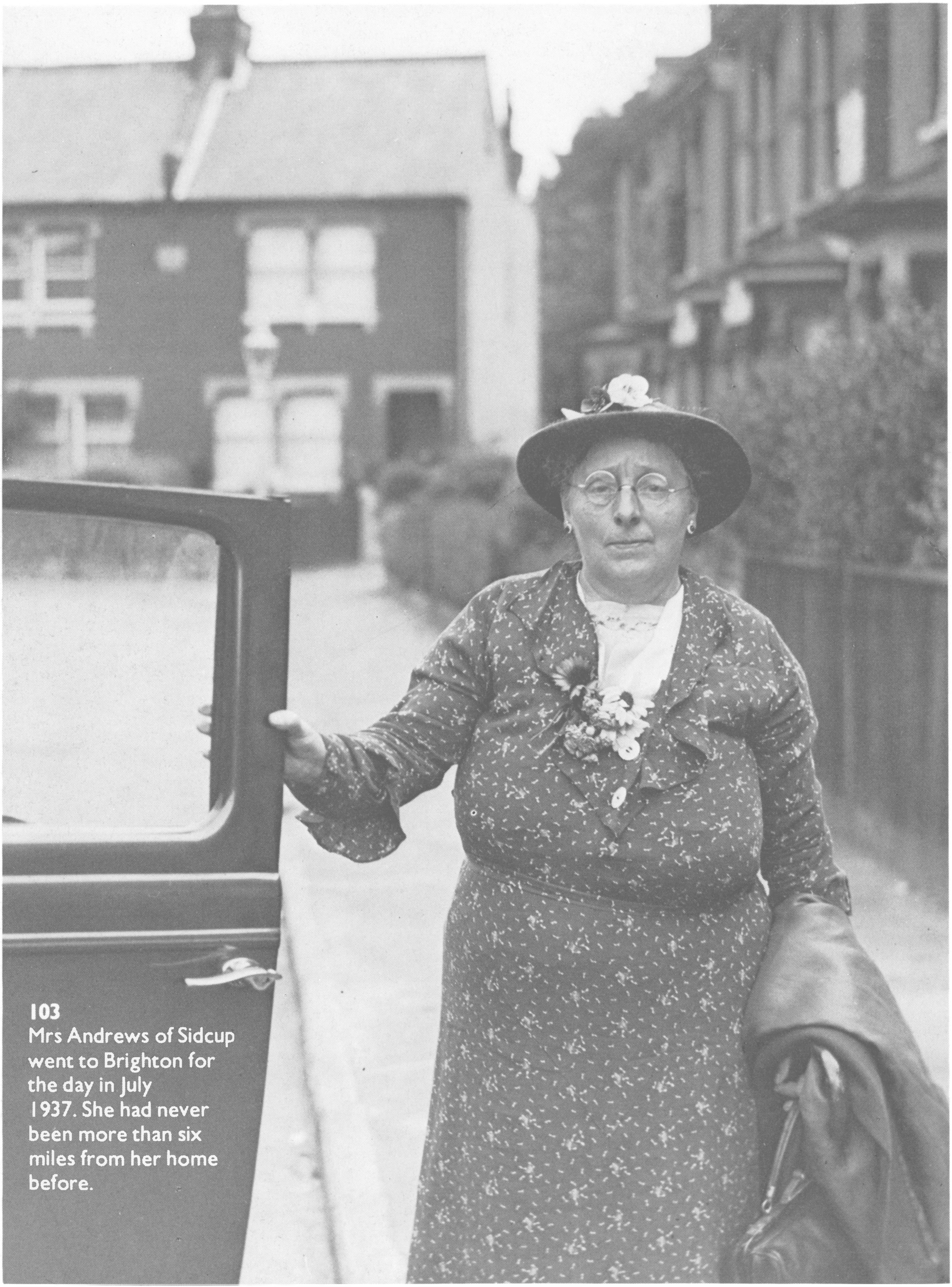
▼ **100**
The comedienne Cicely Courtneidge, who was singing 'All the King's Horses' in the early thirties.

◀ **98**
Actors and actresses such as Gertrude Lawrence, Noël Coward and Ivor Novello dominated the stage in London in the 1930s.

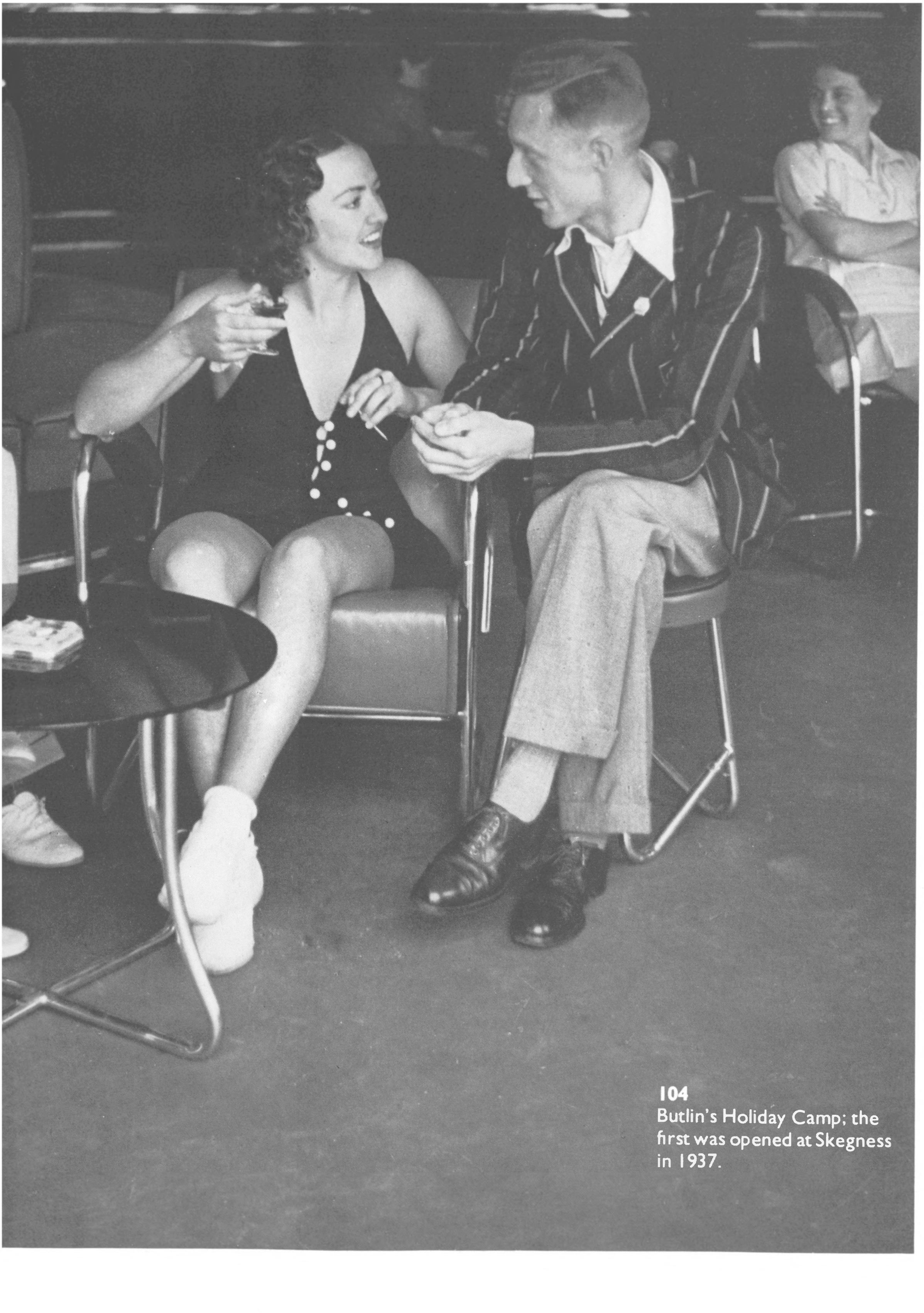
◀ **101**
A seaside holiday was popular with rich and poor. Princess Alexandra, Prince Edward and nannies left Belgrave Square for Sandwich, July 1938.

▼ **102**
East-enders took home-made go-carts to Gravesend.

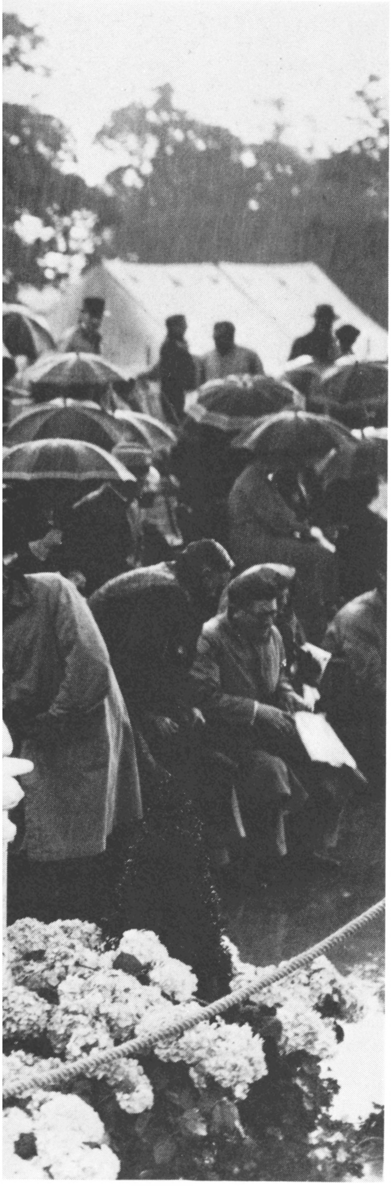




103
Mrs Andrews of Sidcup went to Brighton for the day in July 1937. She had never been more than six miles from her home before.



104
Butlin's Holiday Camp; the first was opened at Skegness in 1937.

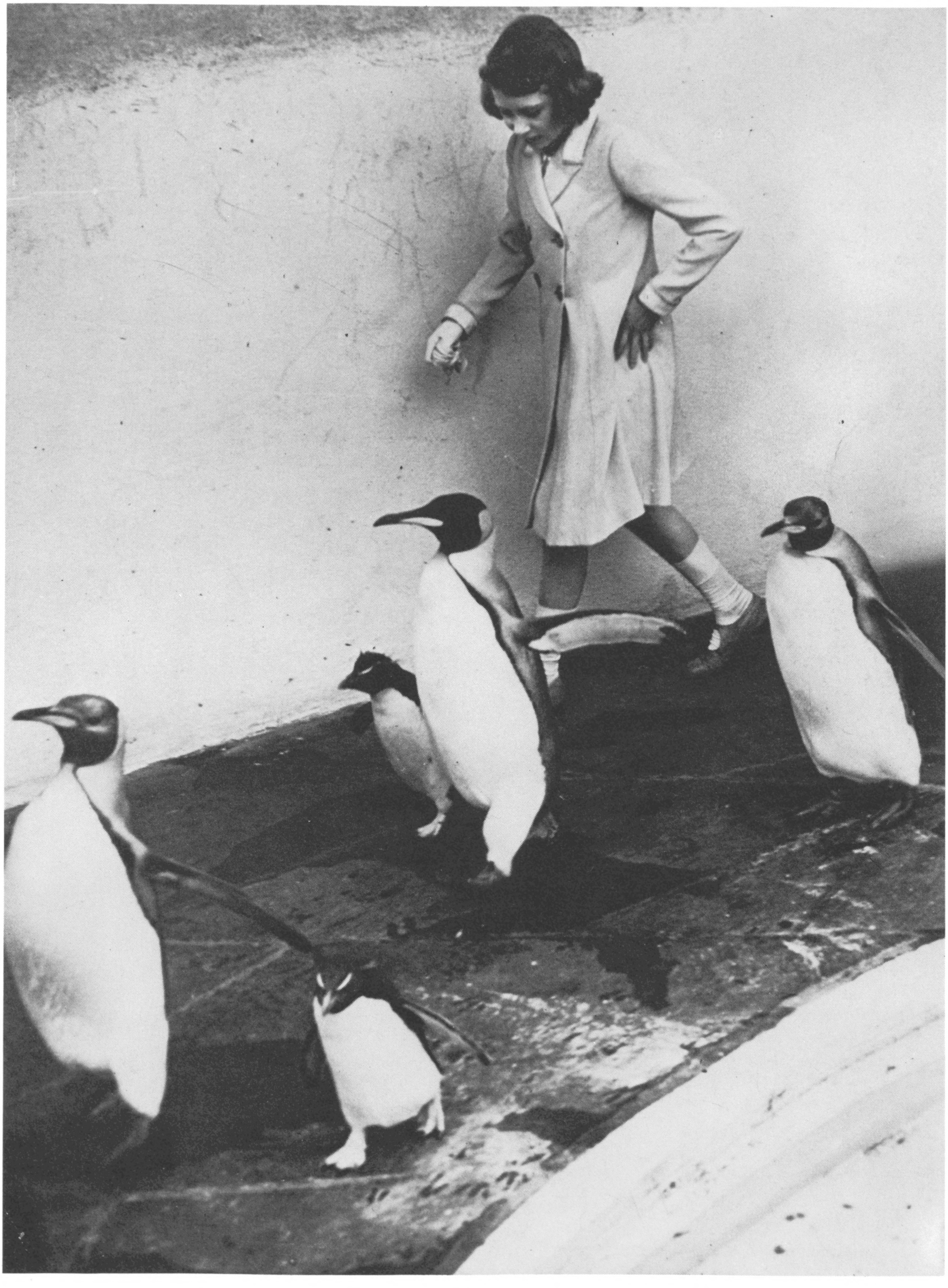


▲ **105**
A 'Keep Fit' craze swept the nation. Bexley Heath opened its public swimming bath in typical English weather, 1936.

► **106**
Cycling became a popular sport. These cyclists had been bluebell-gathering.

▲ **107**
Litter became a problem in the rural beauty spots and there were anti-litter campaigns.

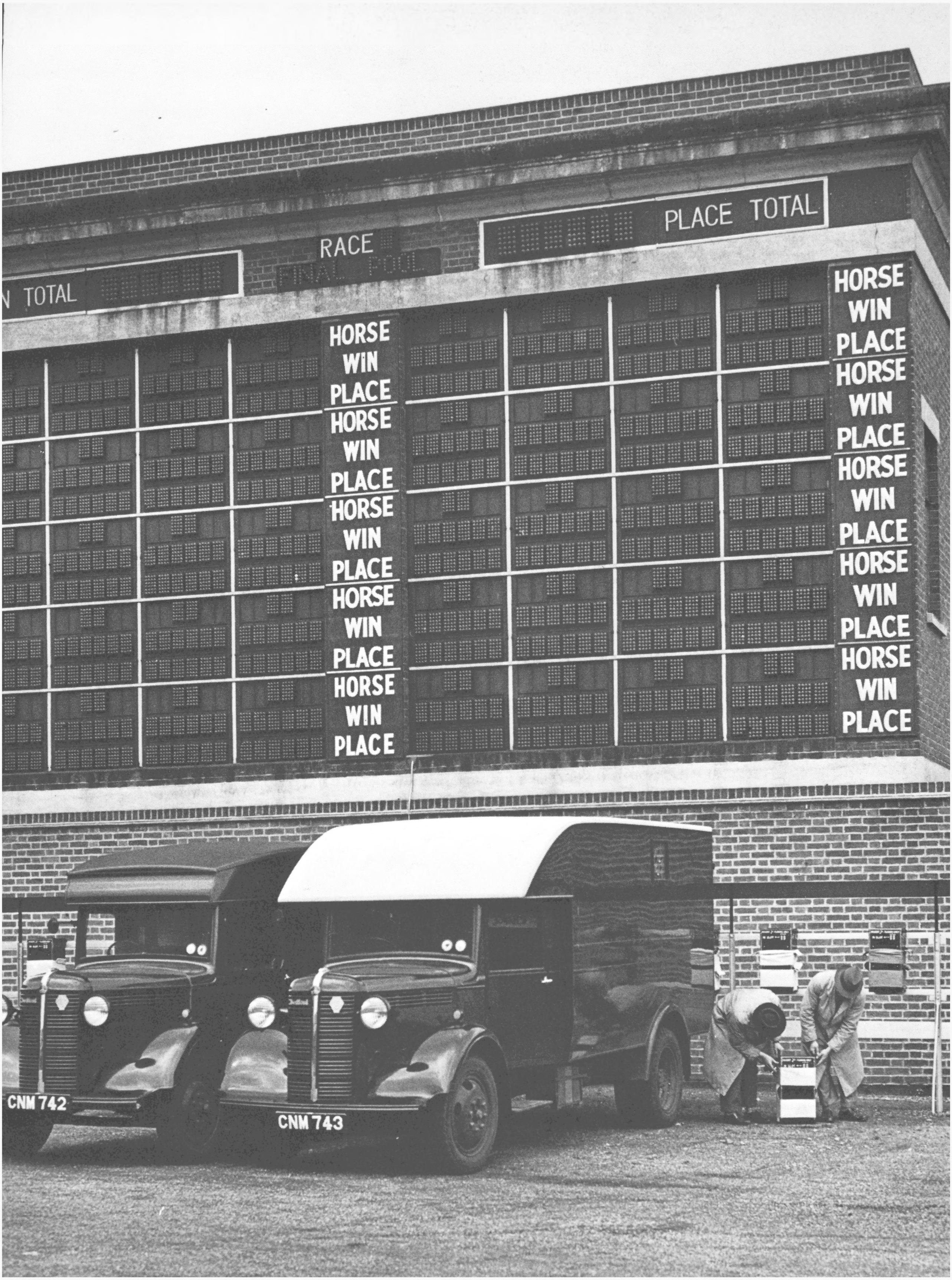
► **108**
The zoo was a perennial favourite and some exciting buildings went up in the thirties such as the Penguin Park at London Zoo (1933–4). Princess Elizabeth was allowed to go for a walk down the ramp with the penguins on a visit in 1938.



◀ **109**
Gambling, on the pools, greyhound-racing and horse-racing, was the chief vice and excitement of the thirties. By 1931 there were eighteen million attendances at greyhound racing tracks.

◀ **110**
Moralists were shocked that women, too 'went to the dogs'.

▶ **111**
The 'tote' at Hurst Park, 1939. Totalisators encouraged small betting and helped horse-racing hold its own against the competition from the greyhound tracks.


N TOTAL
RACE
FINAL POOL
PLACE TOTAL
HORSE
WIN
PLACE
HORSE
WIN
PLACE
HORSE
WIN
PLACE
HORSE
WIN
PLACE
HORSE
WIN
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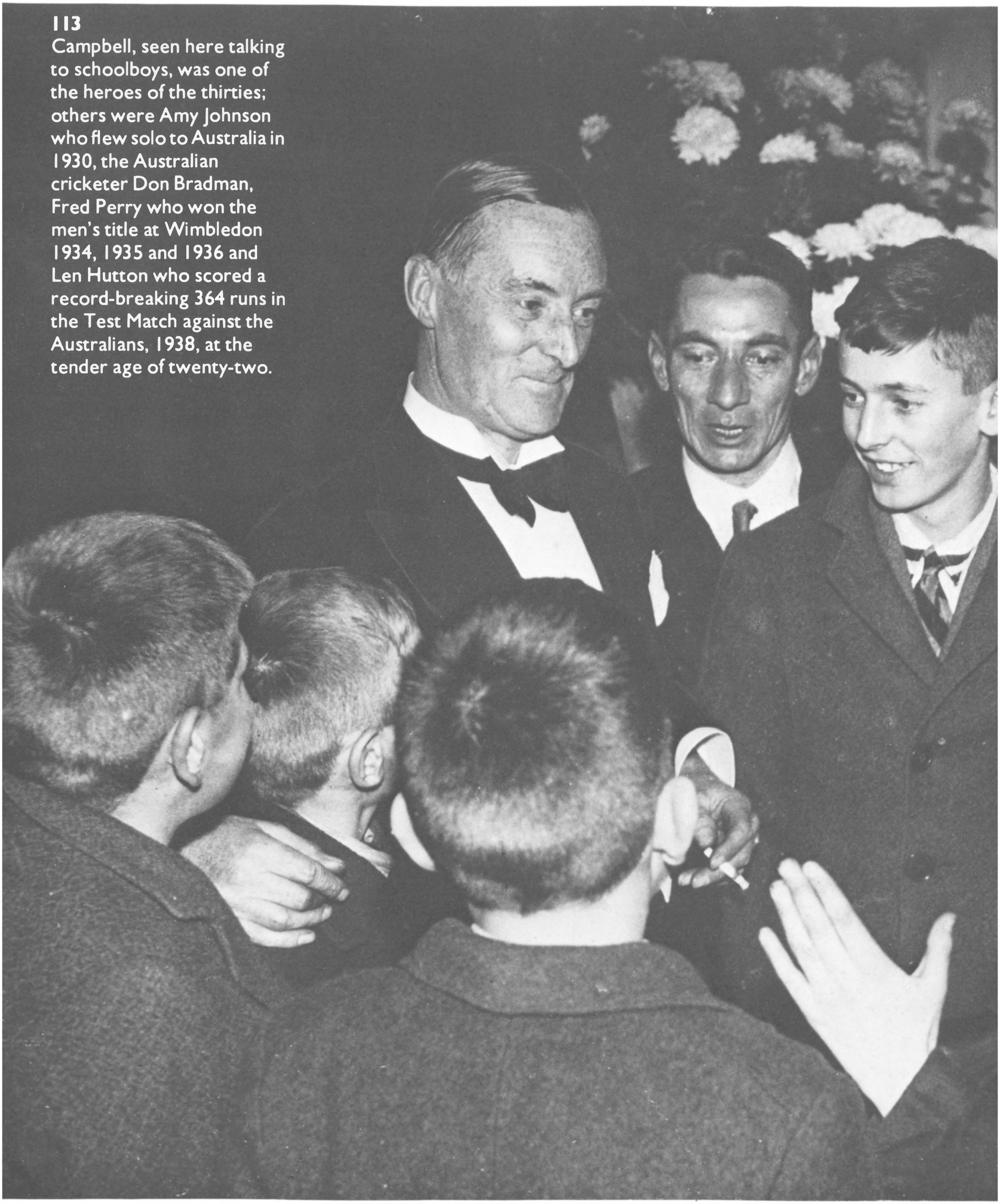
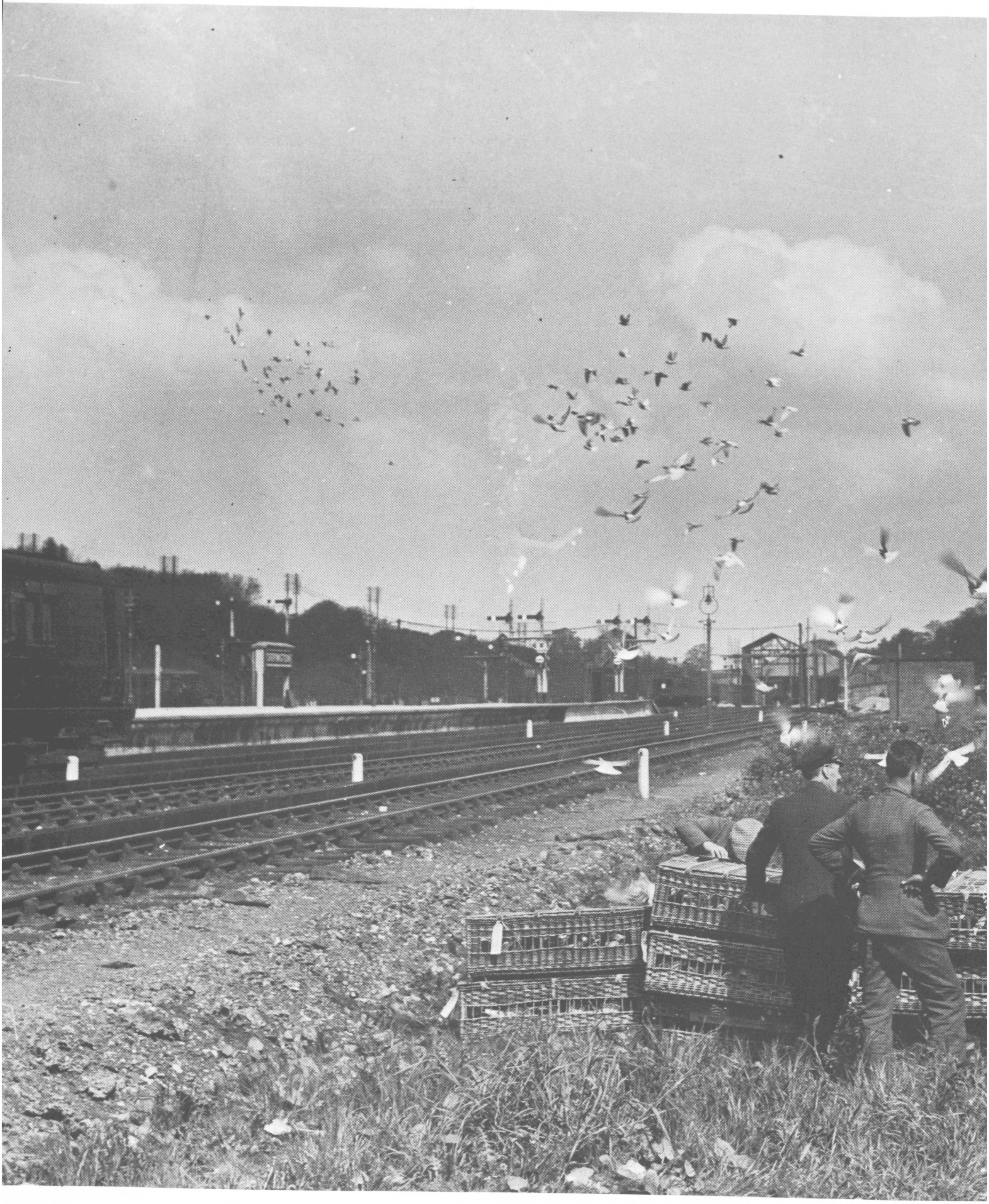
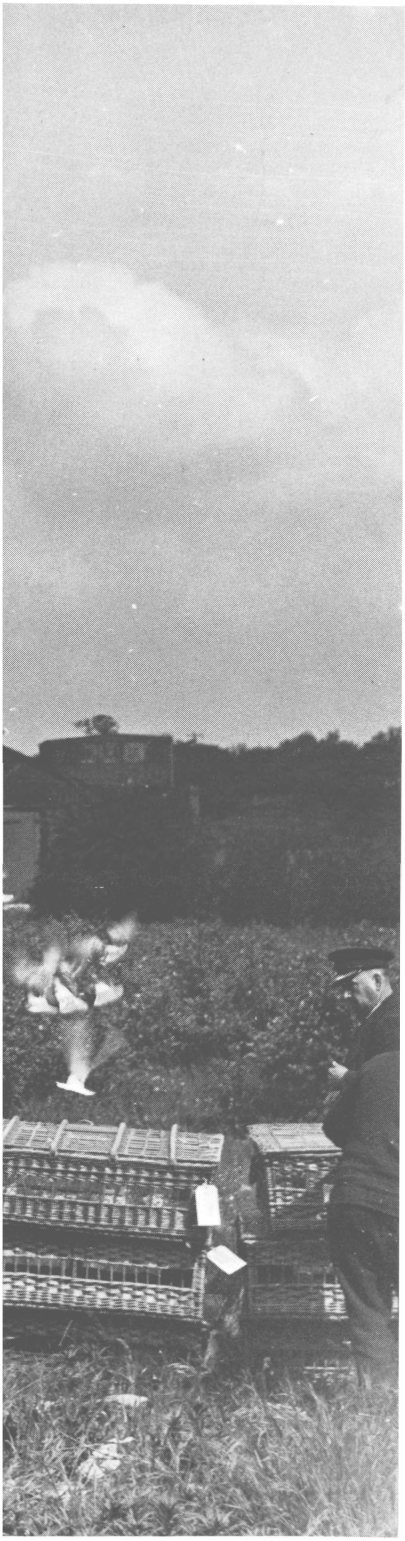
WIN
PLACE
HORSE
WIN
PLACE
HORSE
WIN
PLACE
HORSE
WIN
PLACE
HORSE
WIN
PLACE
CNM 742
CNM 743

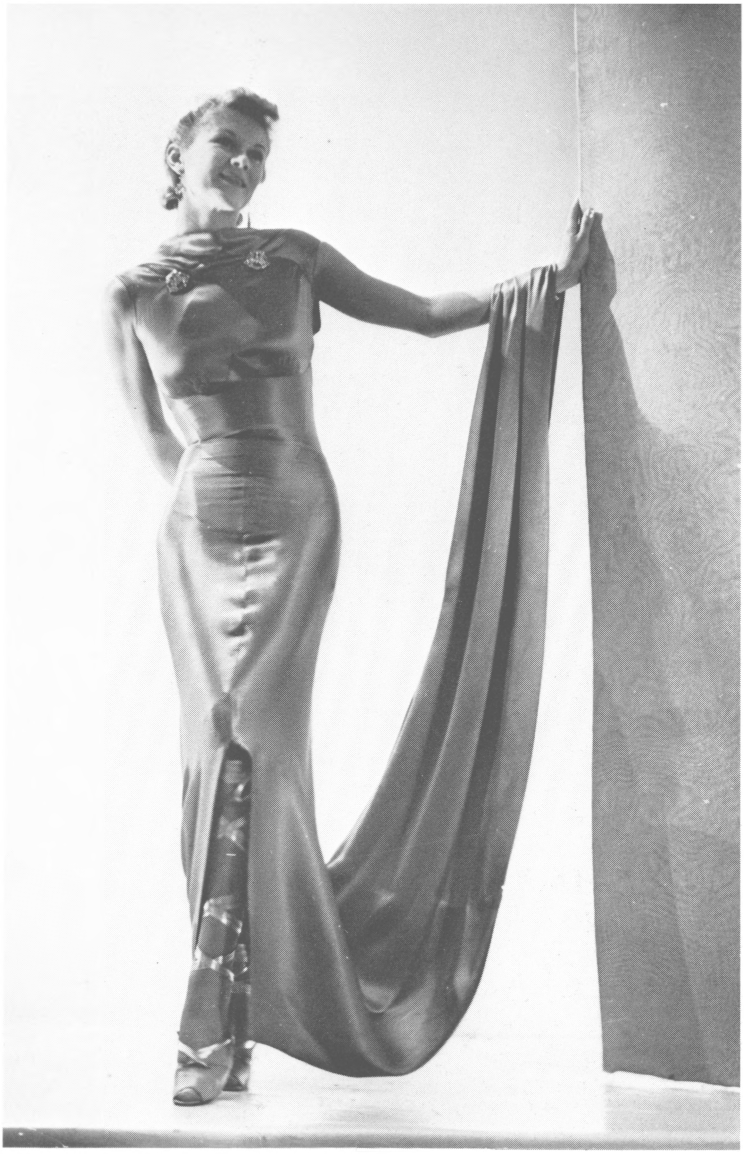
112
Sir Malcolm Campbell, with his new *Bluebird* in 1933. In the cockpit is his son, Donald. Malcolm Campbell was knighted in 1931 when he returned from Florida where he had set a new land speed record of 246.09 m.p.h. in the 1,400 h.p. *Bluebird*. Later *Bluebird* was given a 2,250 h.p. Rolls Royce engine. Campbell's highest speed was 301.13 m.p.h. at Bonneville, Utah in 1935.



113
Campbell, seen here talking to schoolboys, was one of the heroes of the thirties; others were Amy Johnson who flew solo to Australia in 1930, the Australian cricketer Don Bradman, Fred Perry who won the men's title at Wimbledon 1934, 1935 and 1936 and Len Hutton who scored a record-breaking 364 runs in the Test Match against the Australians, 1938, at the tender age of twenty-two.

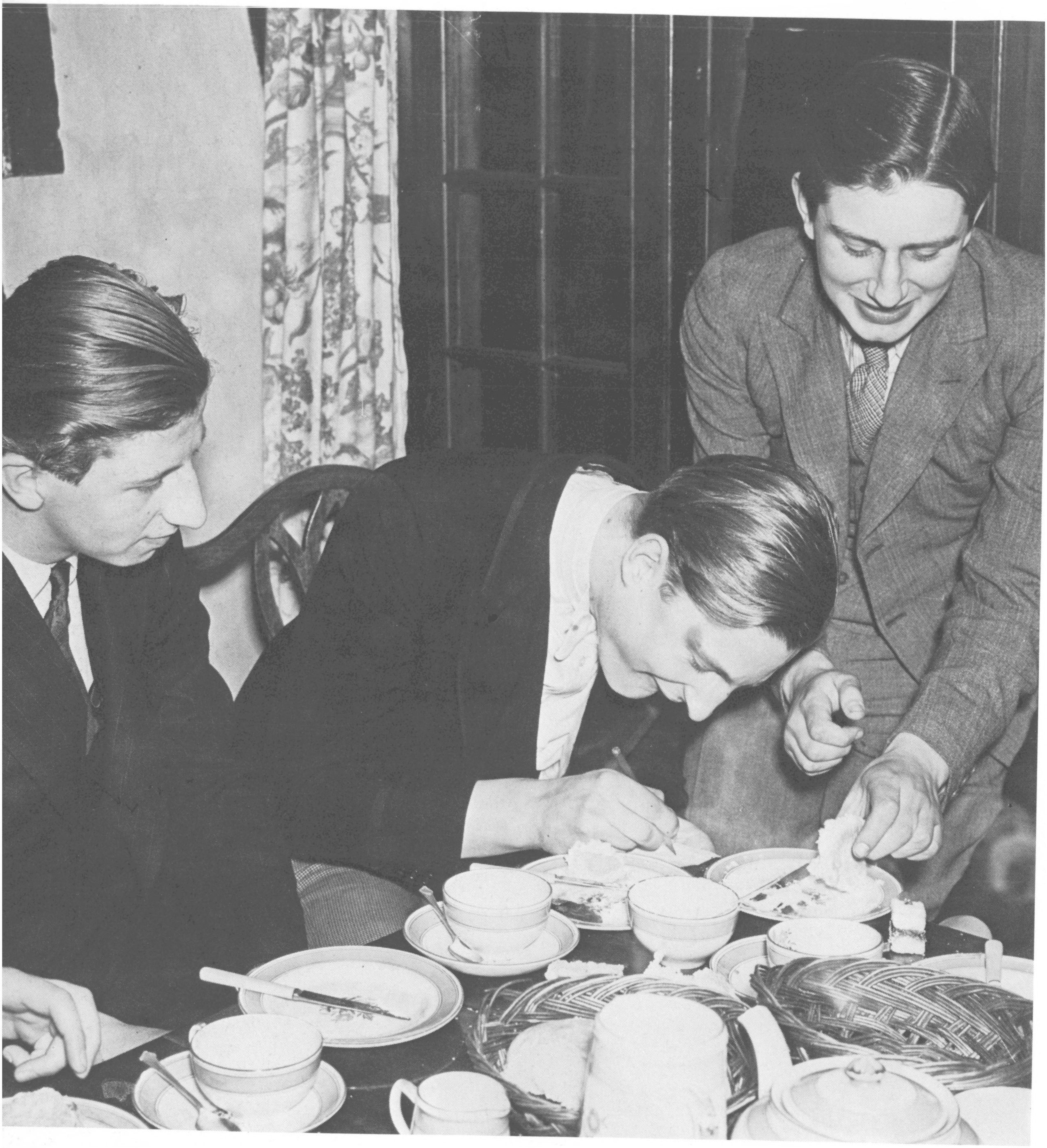






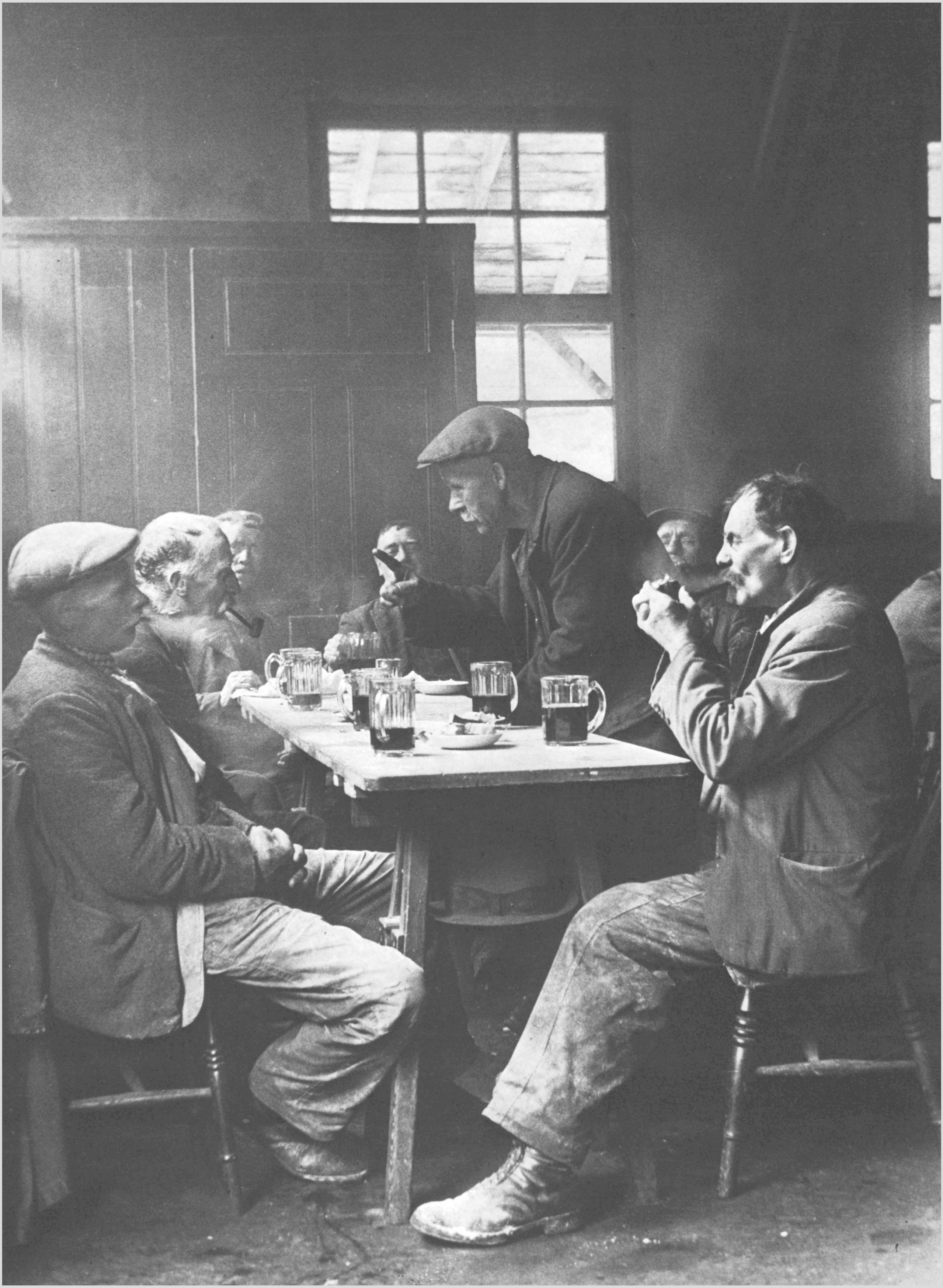
◀ **114**
A quieter, but popular, competitive sport was pigeon-racing. Pigeons, transported by rail, were liberated by the station master for the race.

▲ **115**
A Schiaparelli model, 1937. Elsa Schiaparelli, with Coco Chanel, dominated the Paris fashion world in the thirties; she was the first to use artificial fabrics for her dresses.



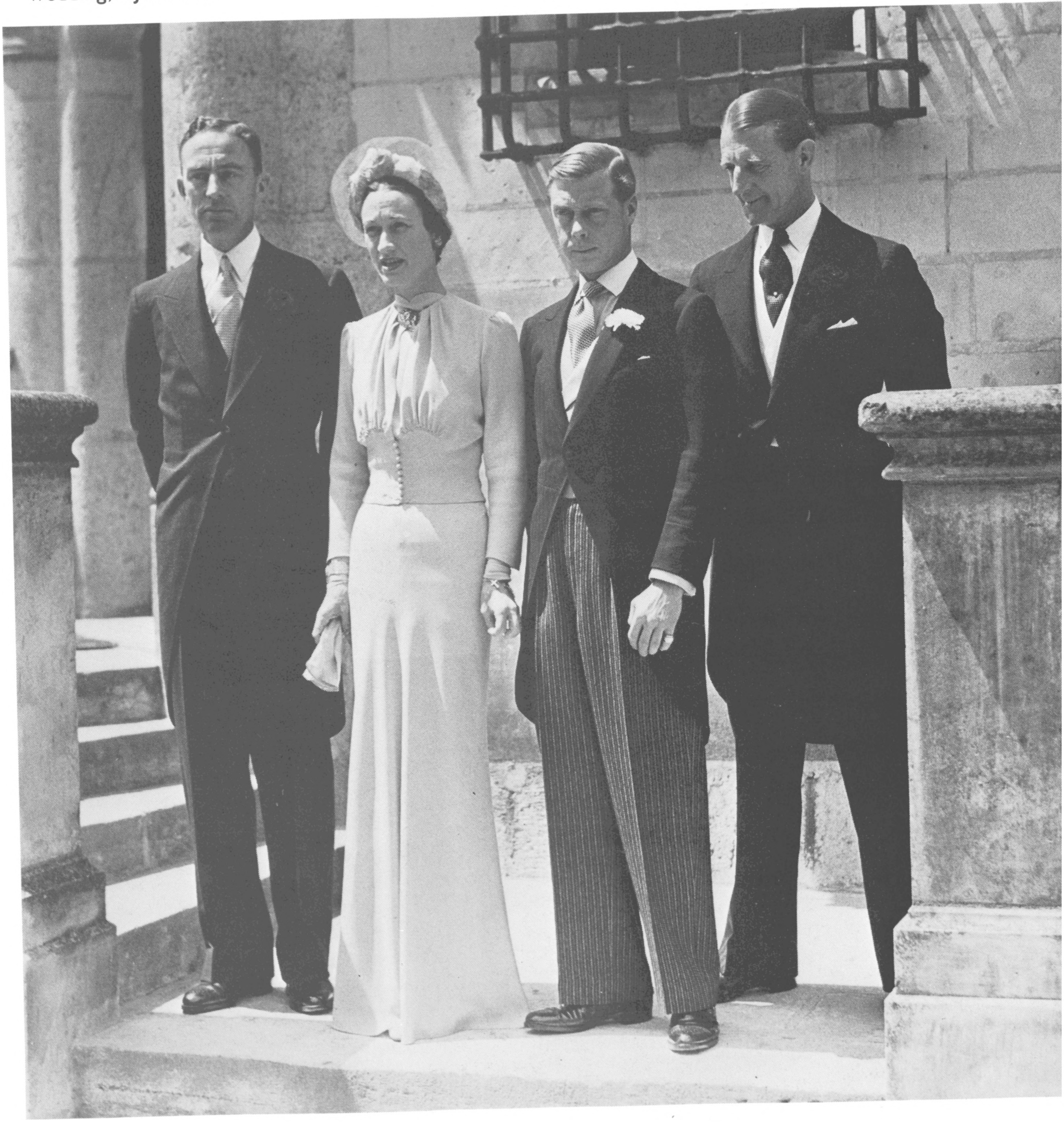
▲ **116**
Eton boys in a tea shop.

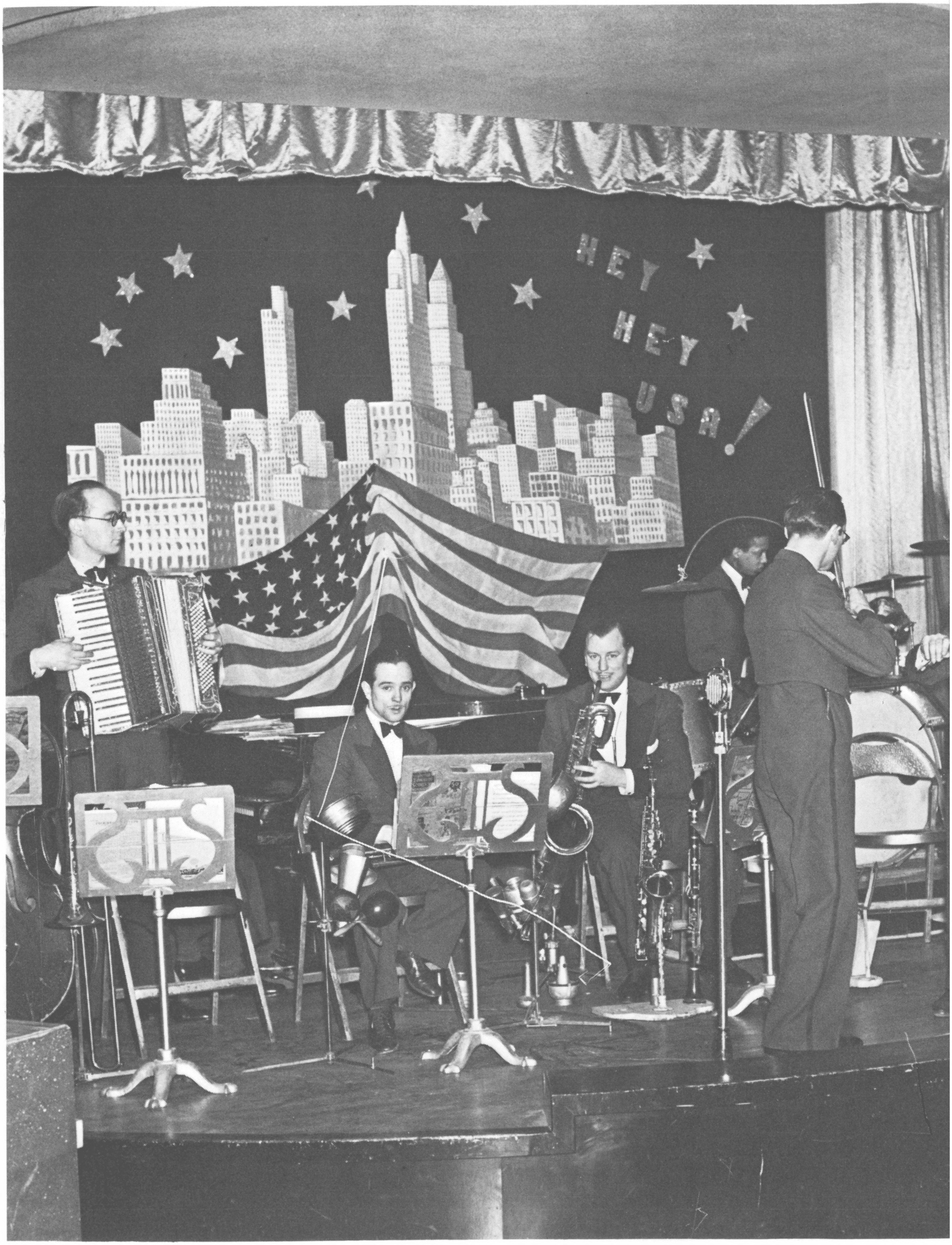
▶ **117**
A country pub, 1931.



◀ **118**
1932 Bank holiday, Dartford Paddling Pool.

▼ **119**
The Duke and Duchess of Windsor after their wedding, 3 June 1937.

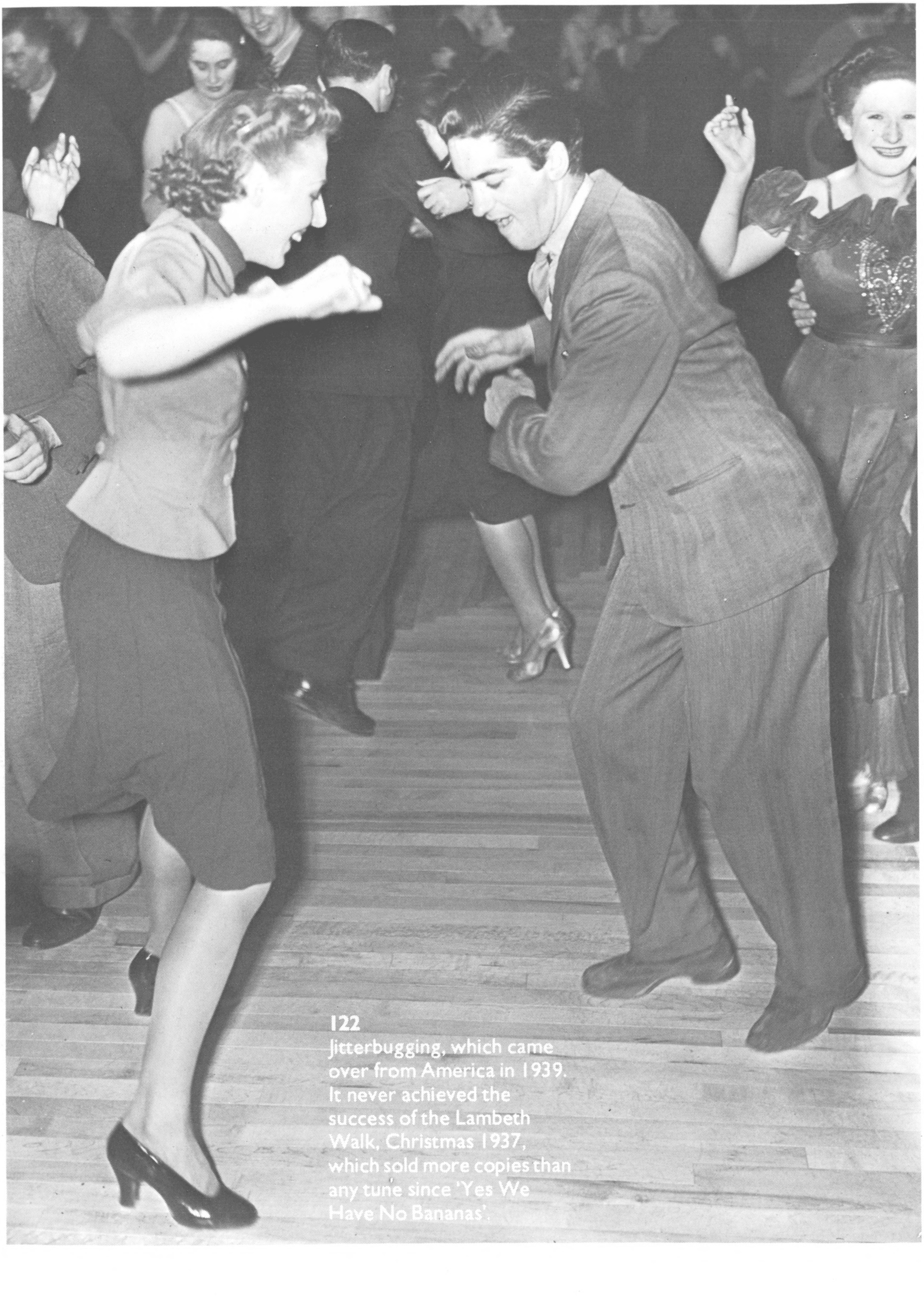



HEY
HEY
USA!

THE PA
WHEN MY GIRL AND I GO
ARM IN ARM WE STROLL
VERY SOON SHE'LL SMILE
STROLLING IN THE PAR
WHILE THE BAND IS PLAY
THEN YOU'LL SEE US S
SWINGING OUR BL
AND IF WE SHOU
WE'LL MAKE UP A
STROLLING IN TH
YIP-P AIN

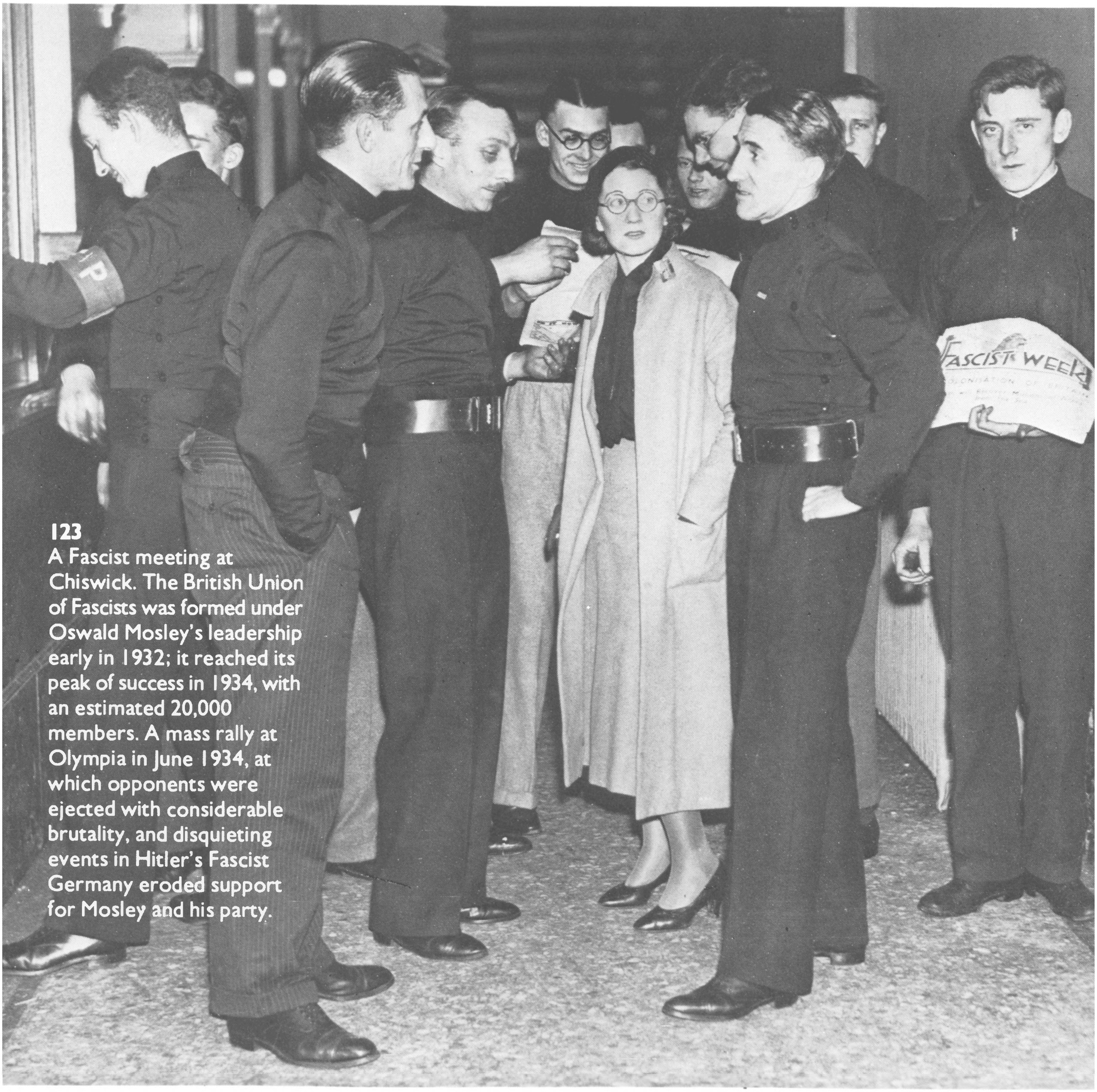
◀ **120**
The light music and dance tunes of the thirties came mainly from America.

▲ **121**
Buying gramophone records with the help of hand-held earphones.

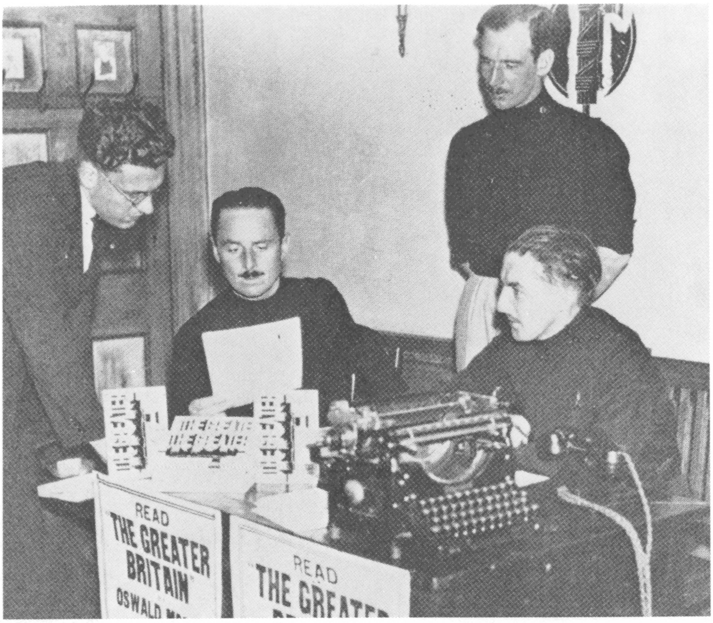


122
Jitterbugging, which came over from America in 1939. It never achieved the success of the Lambeth Walk, Christmas 1937, which sold more copies than any tune since 'Yes We Have No Bananas'.

THE GATHERING STORM

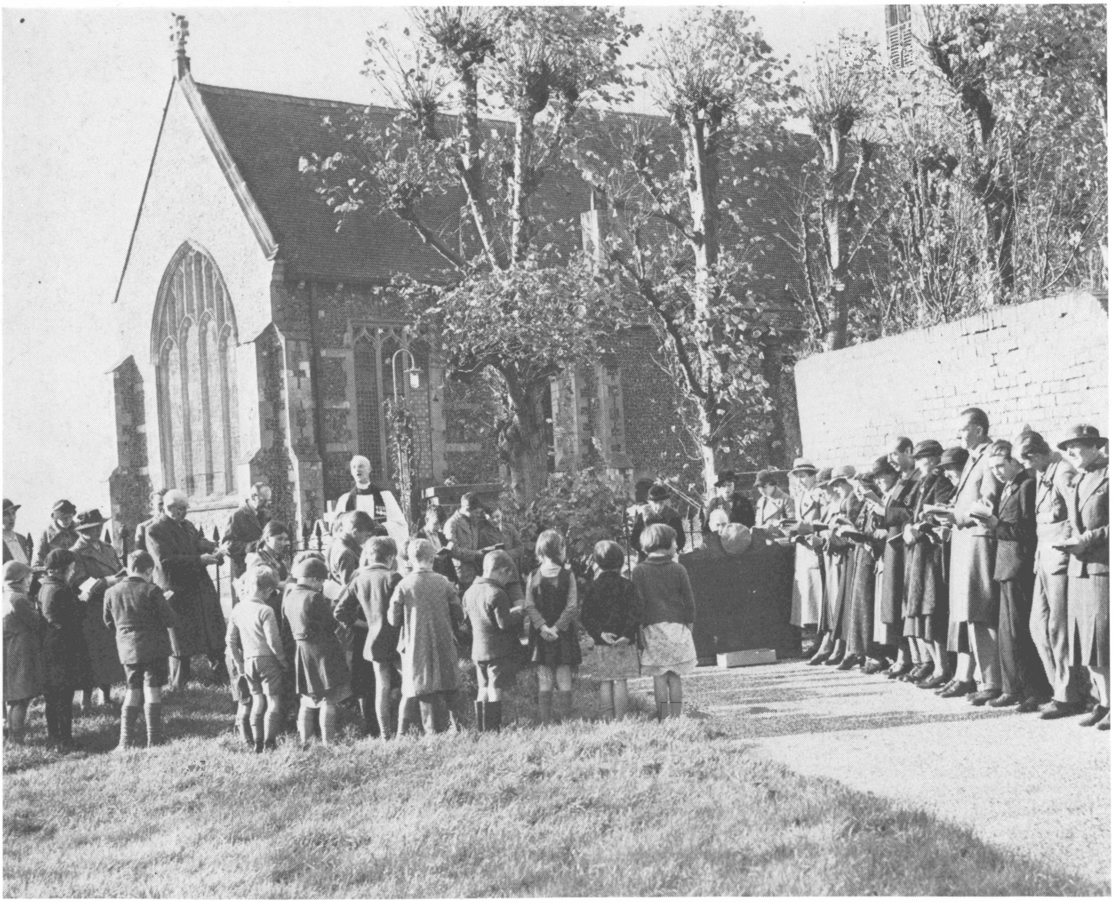


123
A Fascist meeting at Chiswick. The British Union of Fascists was formed under Oswald Mosley's leadership early in 1932; it reached its peak of success in 1934, with an estimated 20,000 members. A mass rally at Olympia in June 1934, at which opponents were ejected with considerable brutality, and disquieting events in Hitler's Fascist Germany eroded support for Mosley and his party.

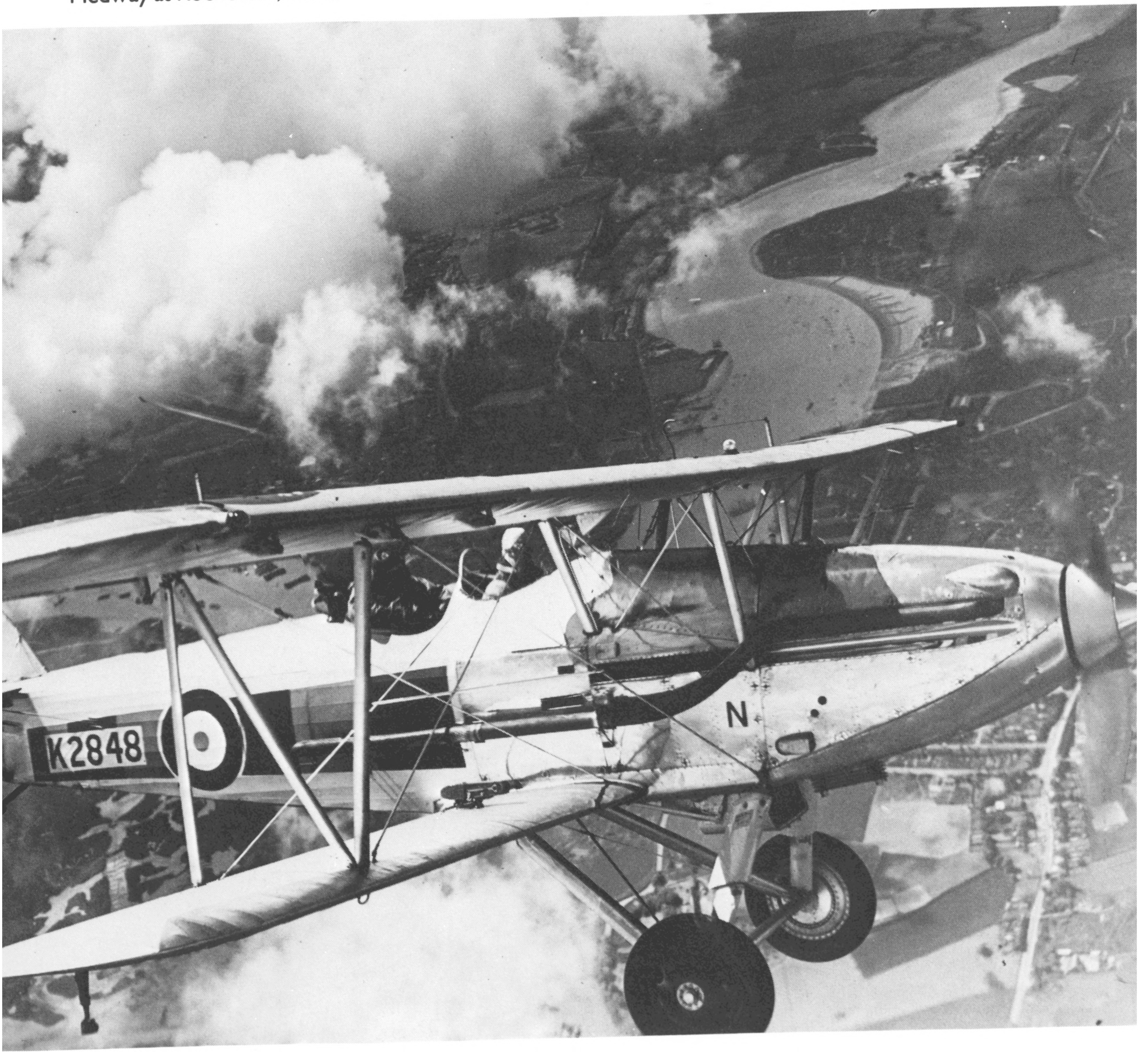

READ
THE GREATER
BRITAIN
OSWALD MO
READ
THE GREATER

◀ **124**
Oswald Mosley (second from left) in 1932, the year that his book *The Greater Britain* was published.

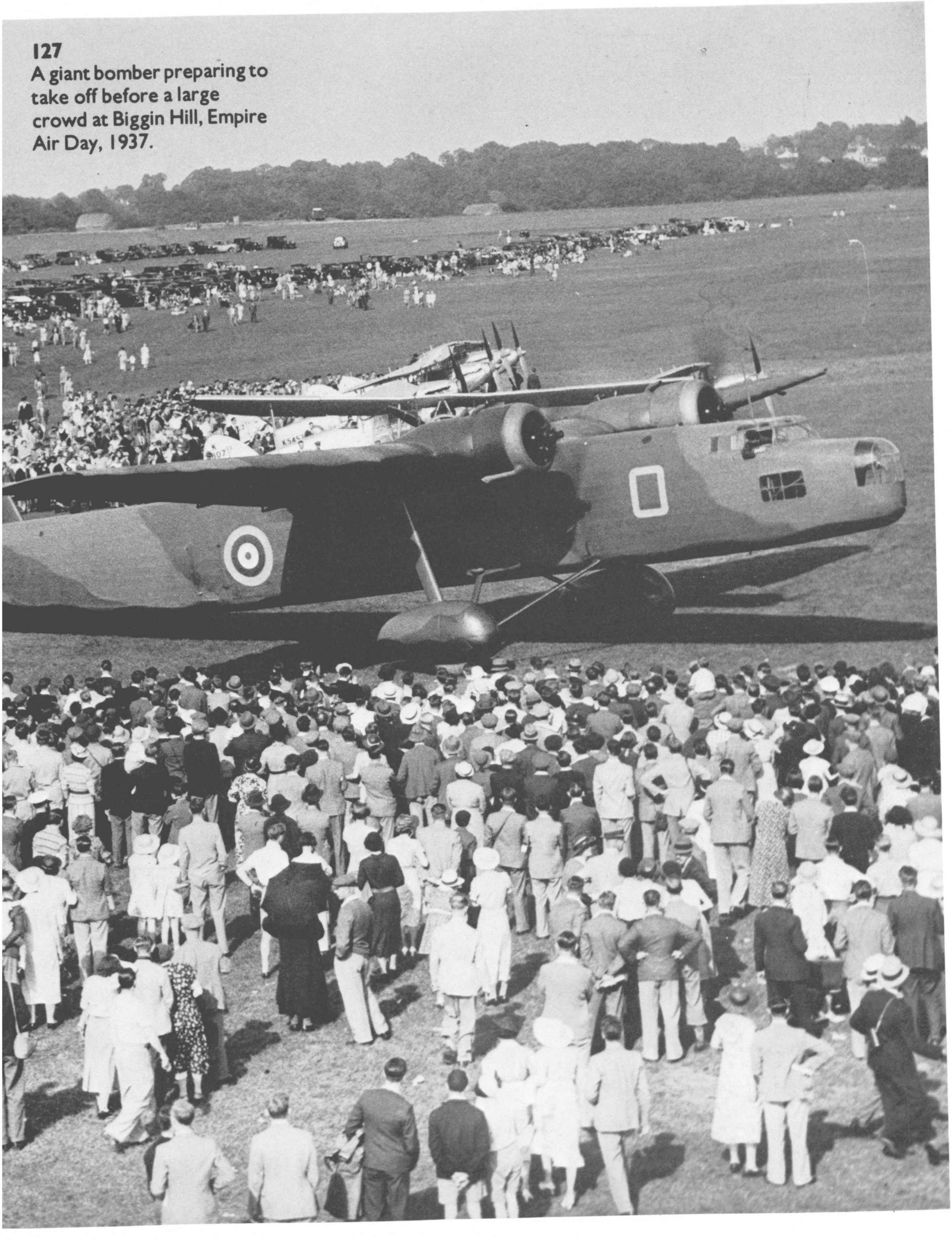
▼ **125**
Armistice memorial service, 1938. Within two years many of the 1914–18 veterans would enlist in the Home Guard and prepare to resist invasion.



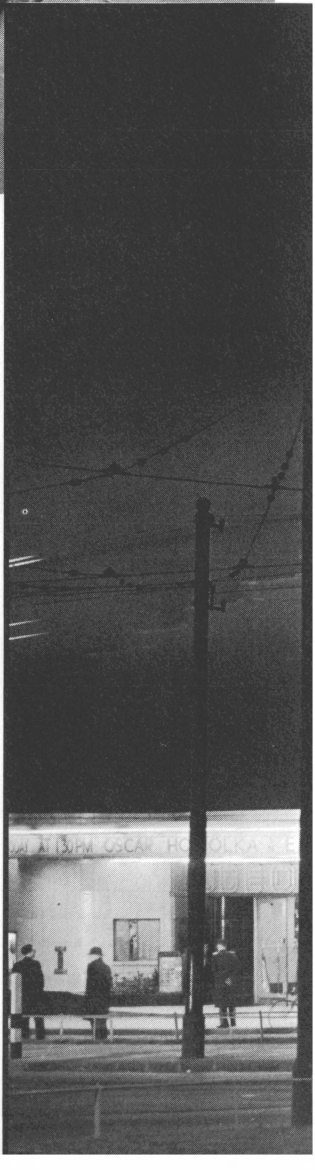
126
A Hawker Demon on a training flight over the Medway at Rochester, 1938.



127
A giant bomber preparing to take off before a large crowd at Biggin Hill, Empire Air Day, 1937.

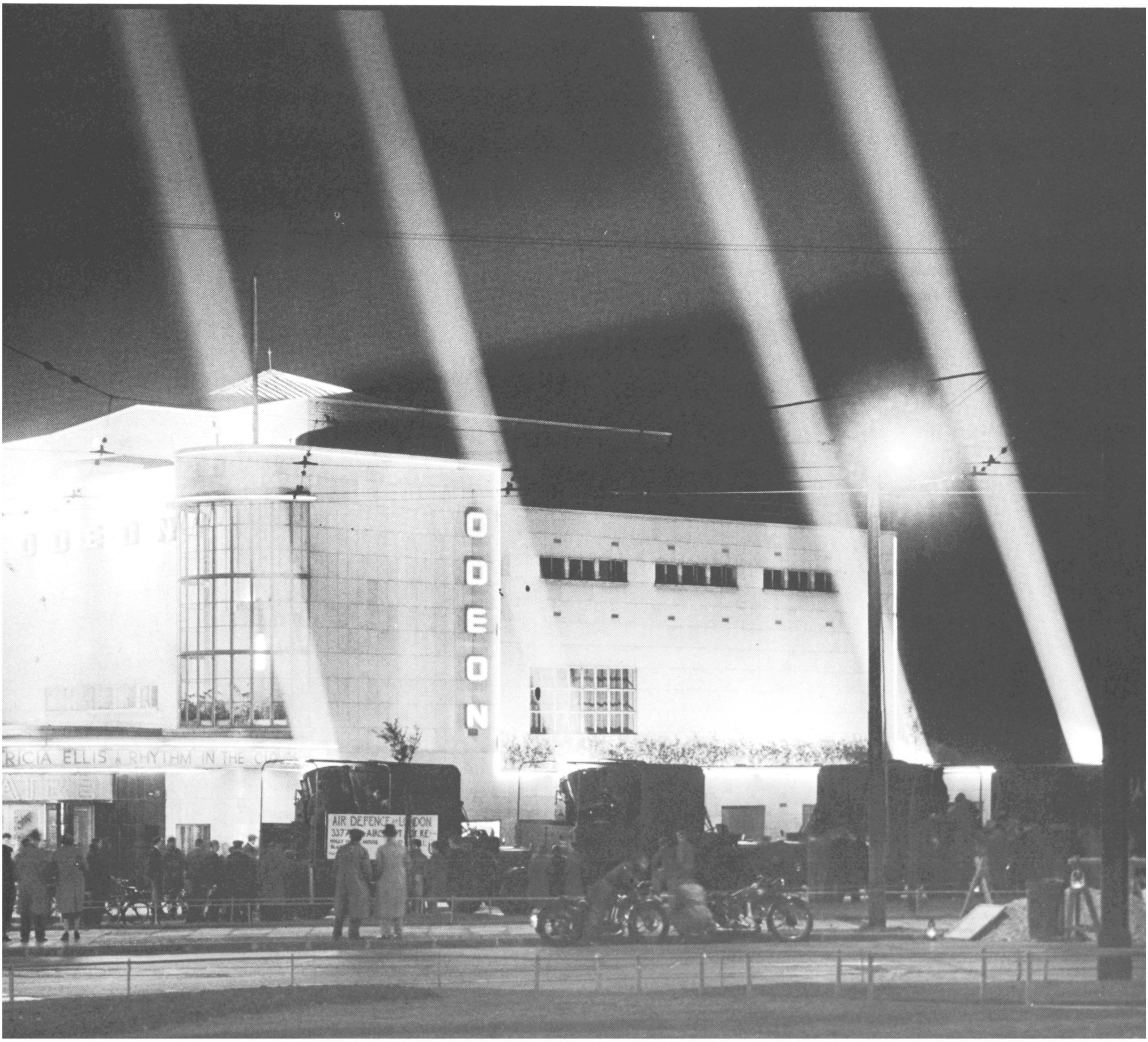


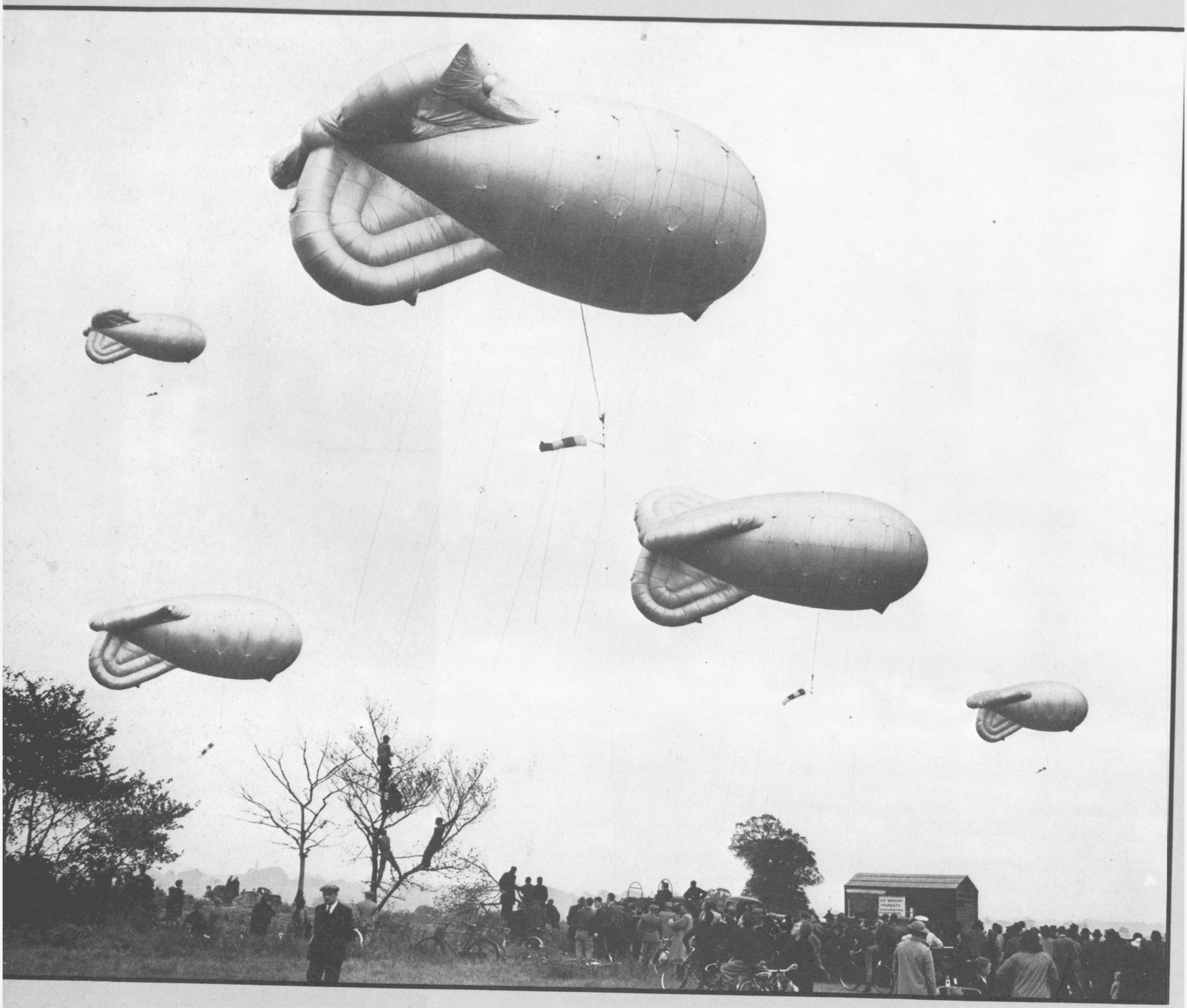
CZECHOSLOVAKIA
MUST
REMAIN FREE.


AT 3PM OSCAR HOMOLKA

◀ **128**
The Czechoslovakia crisis, March 1938. Demonstrators outside the German Embassy in Carlton House Terrace.

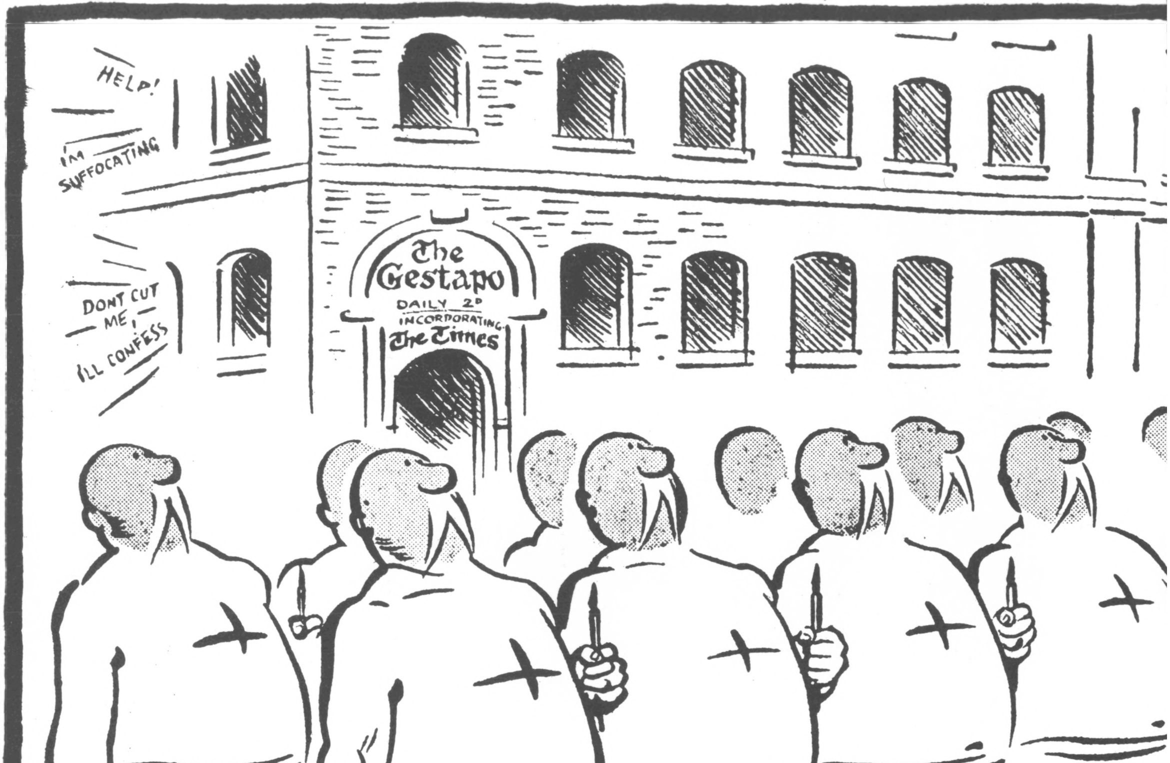
▼ **129**
May, 1938. Air Defence of London searchlights giving a display outside the Odeon cinema, Wellhall.


ODEON
RICIA ELLIS & RHYTHM IN THE CLOUDS
AIR DEFENCE of LONDON

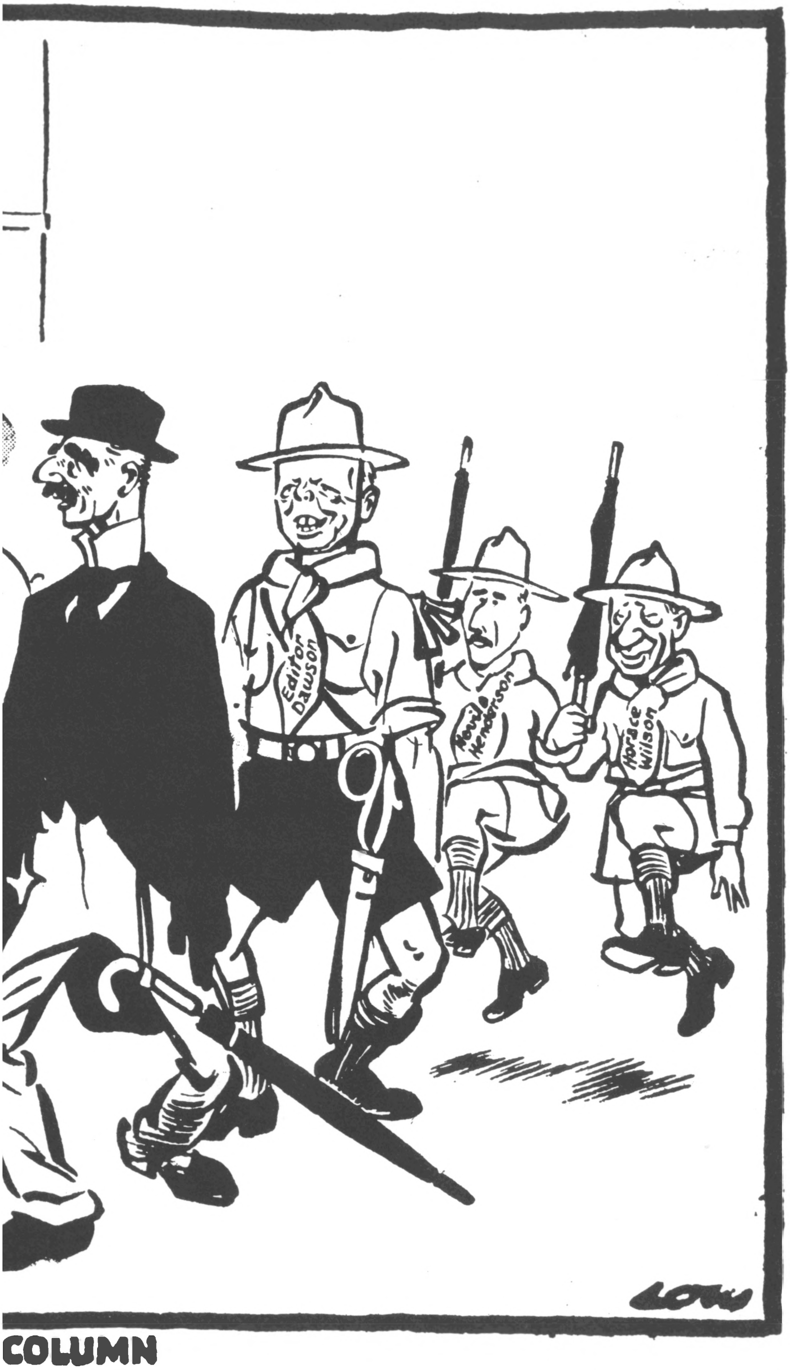


▲ **130**
6 September 1938. The balloon barrage was demonstrated to Sir Kingsley Wood, the Air Minister, at Kidbrooke. By late September most people in Britain expected that war would be declared within a day or two.

► **131**
Appeasement: Chamberlain arrives at Heston after his meeting with Hitler, September 1938.

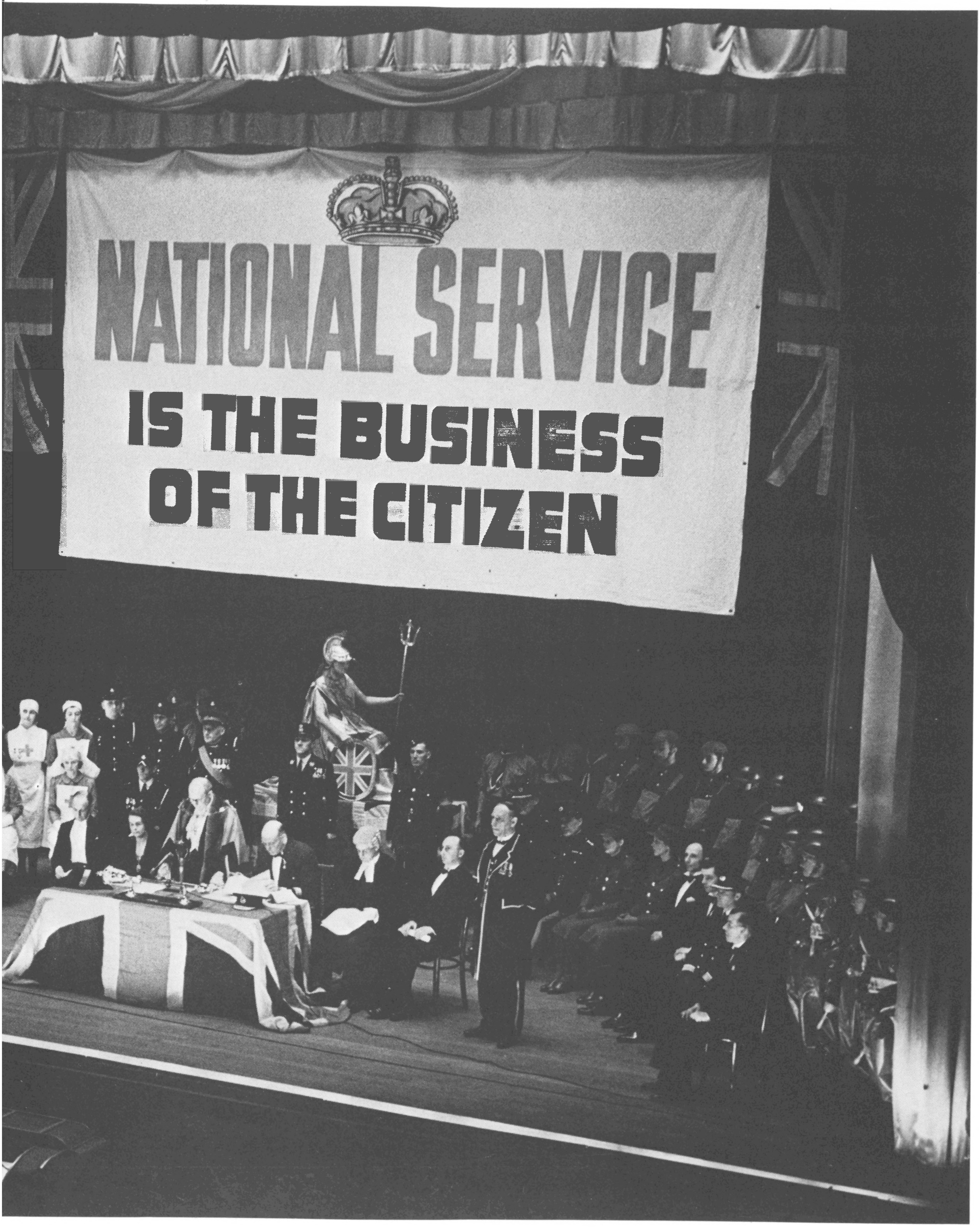

HELP!
I'M SUFFOCATING
DONT CUT ME, I'LL CONFESS
The Gestapo
DAILY 2D
INCORPORATING
The Times
Editor
Sir
Nation refuses Churchill, etc. etc.
Triumph of Munich..
unbounded admiratio
etc., etc.,
to the Editor
Sir–
this is no time
etc, etc.........
Churchill unnecessar
etc, etc..........
Government perfect
etc.
Editor
Sir
Thanks of the nation are due..
etc., etc.
splendid leadership
etc. etc.
Editor
Sir
traditions of Liberalism.. etc.,
personal devotion
....
gallant umbrella
etc. etc.
Sir.
The natio
stands beh
etc., etc.,

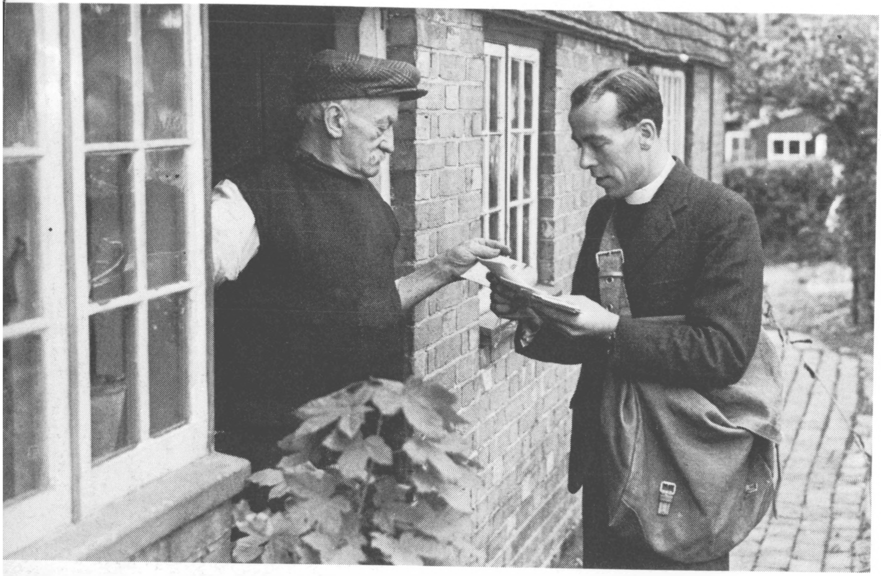
INSPECTION OF THE CORRESPO


Editor Dawson
Nevile Henderson
Horace Wilson
LOW
COLUMN

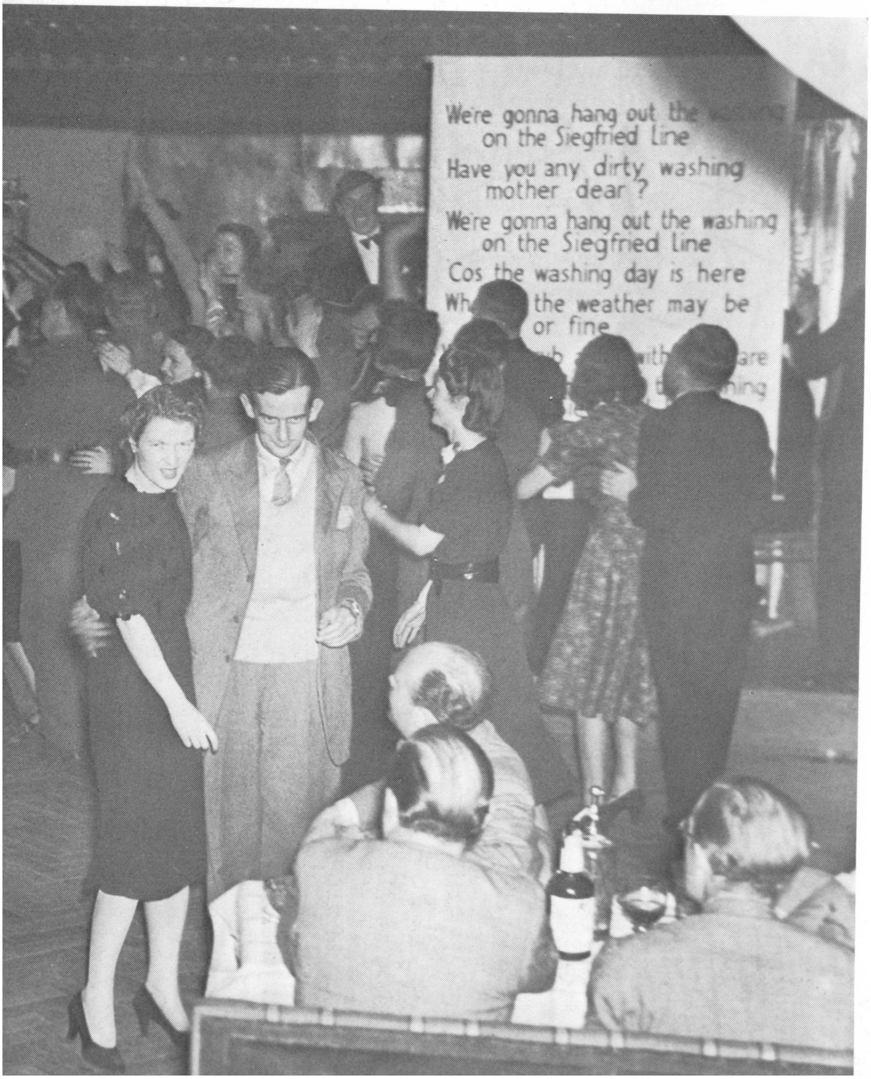
132
David Low's caustic cartoon on the Munich Agreement and 'Peace with honour'.

133
April 1938. The final tableau at a National Service Recruiting Campaign at the Royal Cinema, Bexleyheath.


NATIONAL SERVICE
IS THE BUSINESS
OF THE CITIZEN



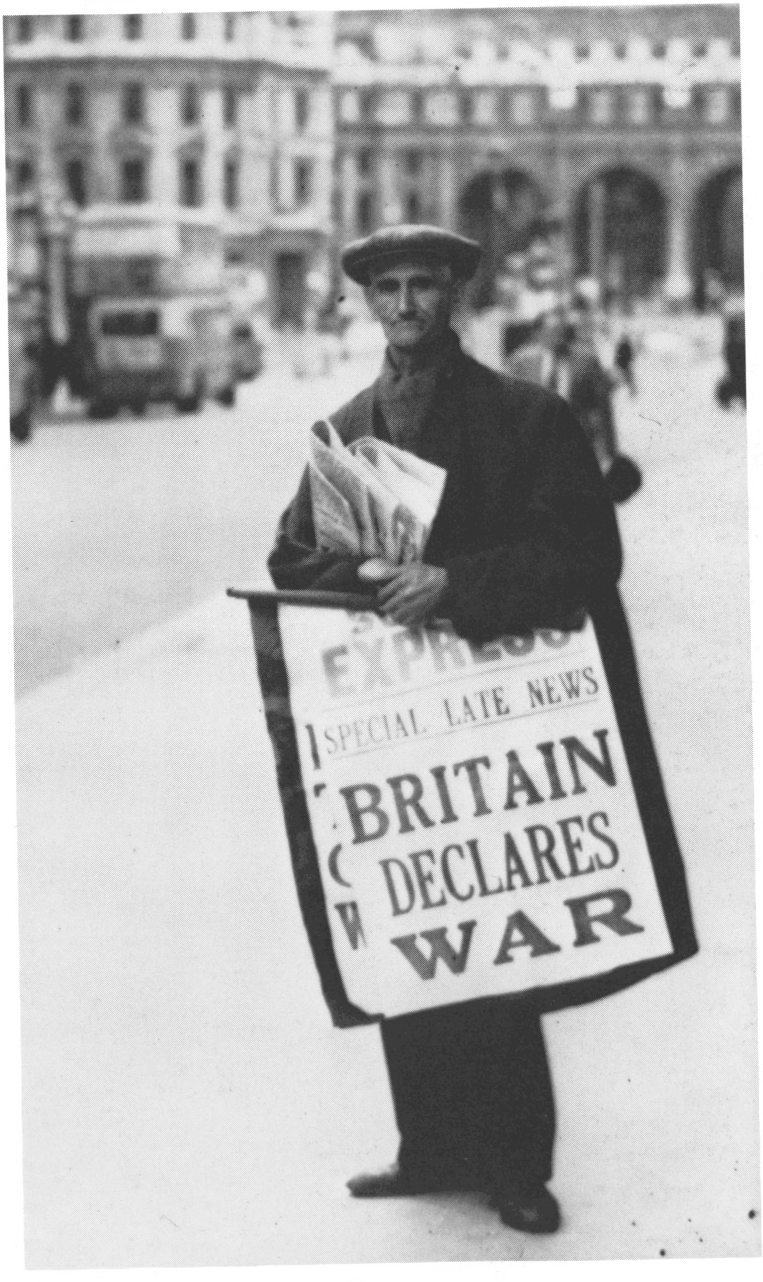
◀ **134**
September 1939. The curate of Horsmonden acting as postman during the crisis over Poland.


We're gonna hang out the washing
on the Siegfried Line
Have you any dirty washing
mother dear?
We're gonna hang out the washing
on the Siegfried Line
Cos the washing day is here
the weather may be
or fine

◀ **135**
'We're gonna hang out the washing on the Siegfried Line' on permanent display at a London nightclub. War had come at last.

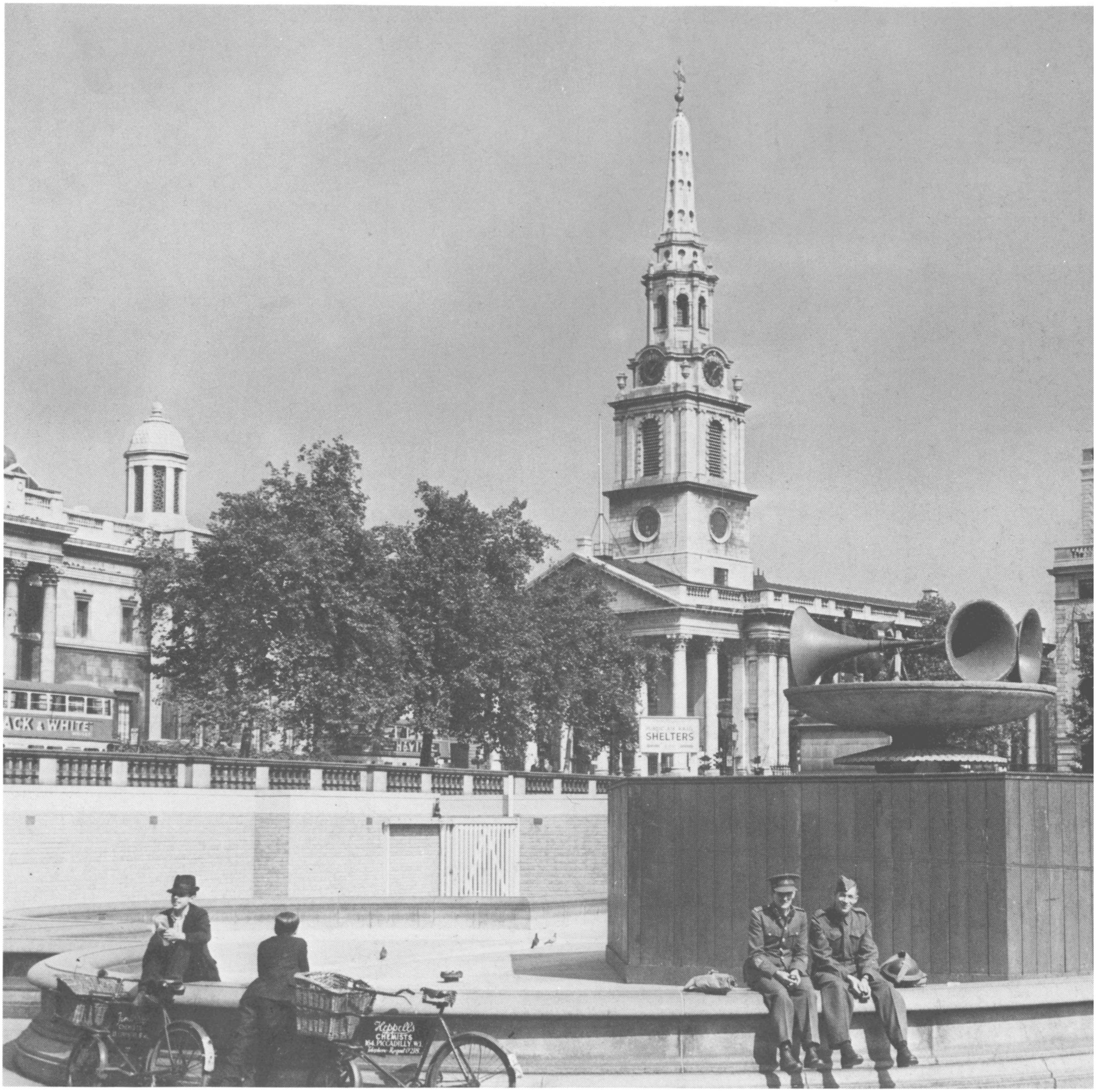
Britain at War

BRITAIN PREPARES

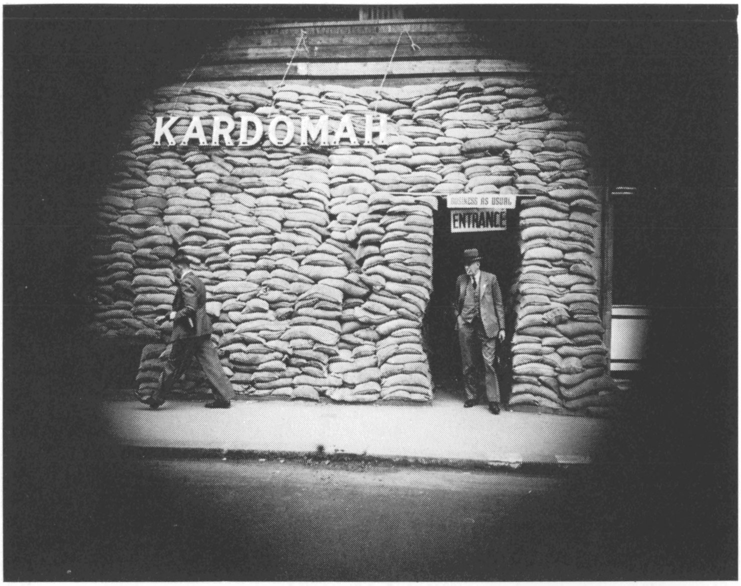

EXPRESS
SPECIAL LATE NEWS
BRITAIN
DECLARES
WAR

136
The end of appeasement: the German Army invaded Poland on 1 September 1939; Britain and France declared war on Germany two days later.

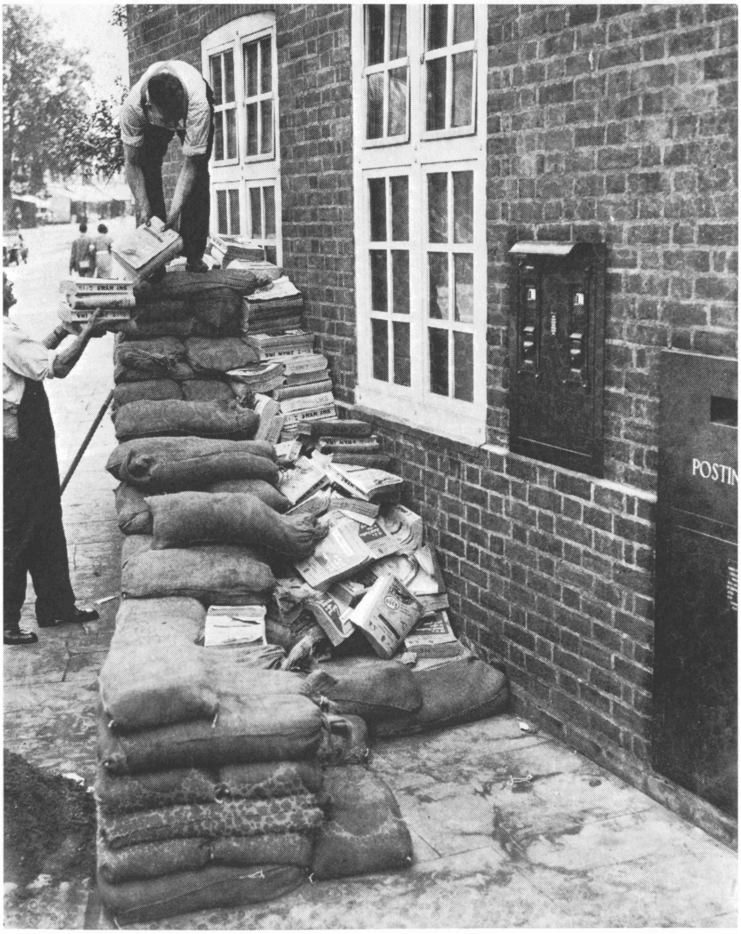
137
The Queen's broadcast to the nation on 12 September 1939.


SHELTERS
ACK & WHITE
Heppell's
CHEMISTS

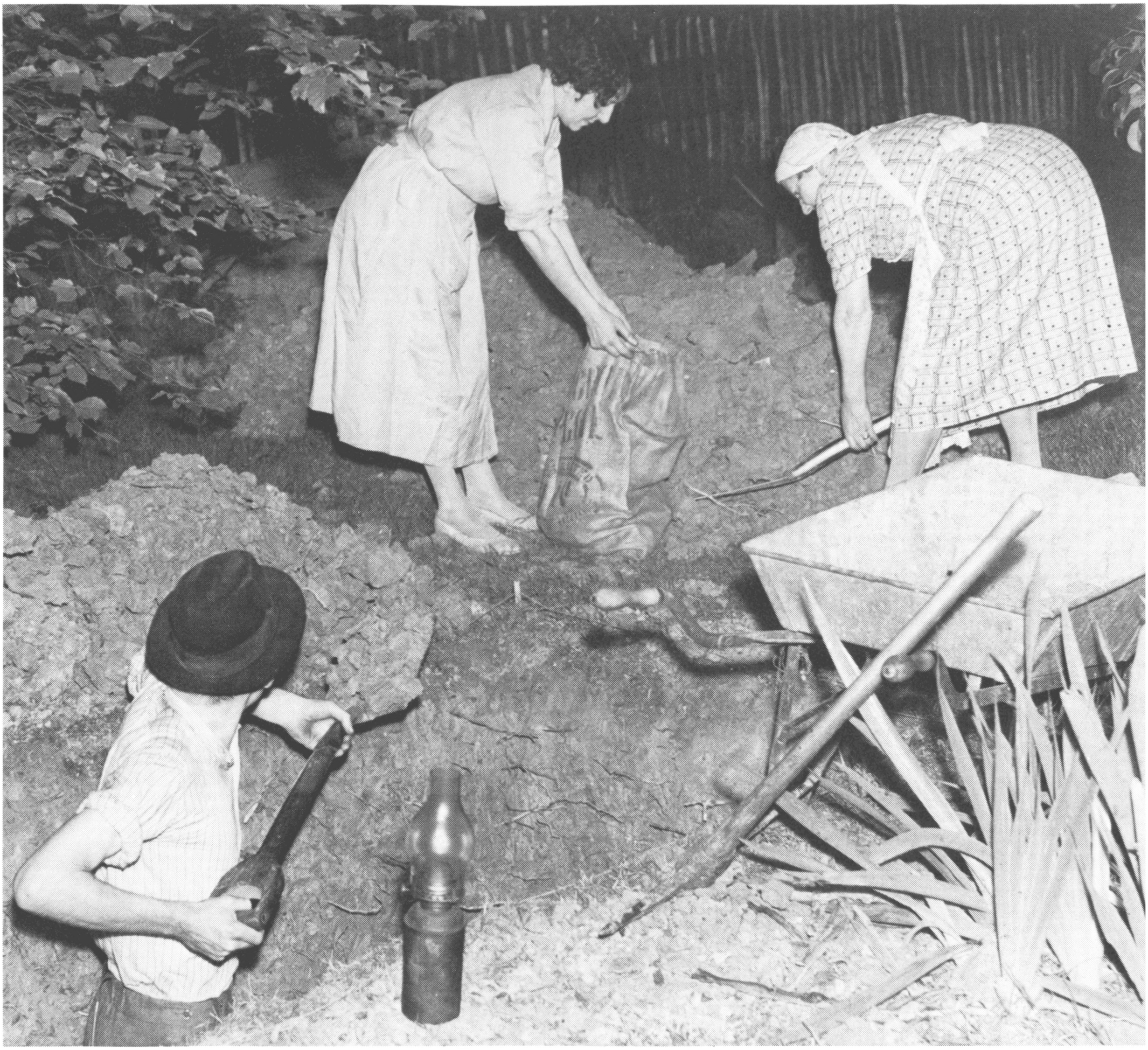
138
The expected bombs did not fall during the Twilight War, or the Phoney War as it was dubbed by the Americans; a peaceful scene in Trafalgar Square as people sat in the sun, near the air raid shelter and the powerful loud-speaker system.


KARDOMAH
BUSINESS AS USUAL
ENTRANCE

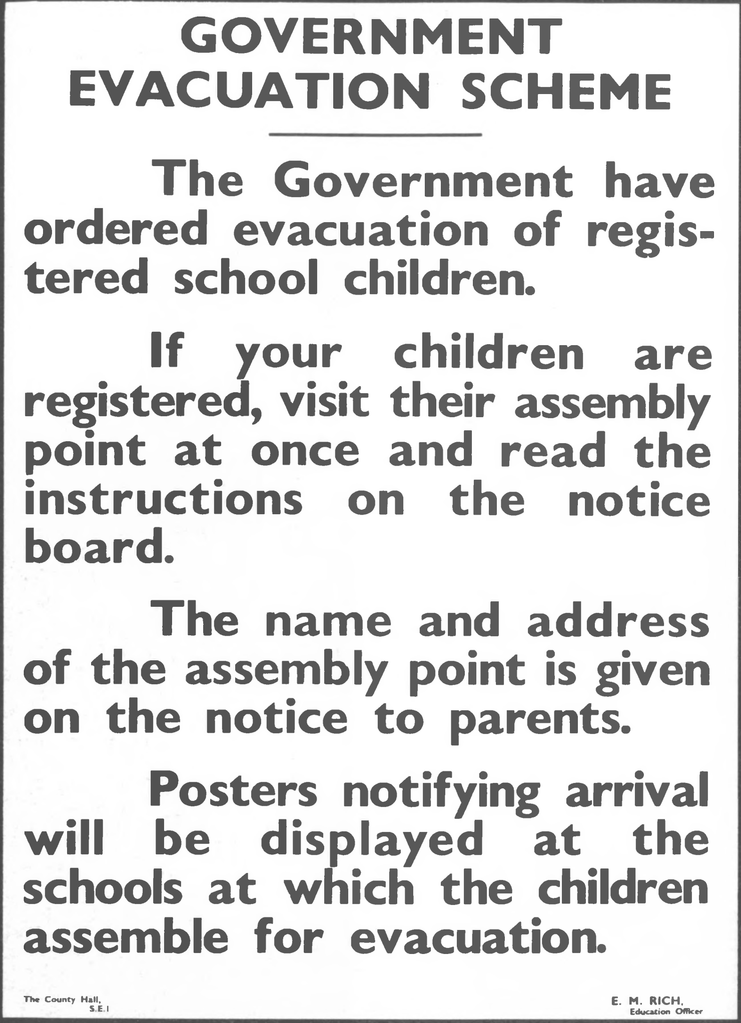
◀ **139**
Business as usual behind a wall of sandbags at the Kardomah. The photograph was taken through a spy hole, as people using cameras ran the risk of being arrested.



◀ **140**
Telephone directories and sandbags were used to defend the Sidcup Post Office.



141
Householders were kept busy even at night. By paraffin lamplight, they filled sandbags and buckets of sand to protect houses from blast and to put out fires. Rose Macaulay wrote at the time: 'I think this is a good thing, as it gives people something they feel useful to do.' The hole created might be used for an air raid shelter.



GOVERNMENT EVACUATION SCHEME

The Government have ordered evacuation of registered school children.

If your children are registered, visit their assembly point at once and read the instructions on the notice board.

The name and address of the assembly point is given on the notice to parents.

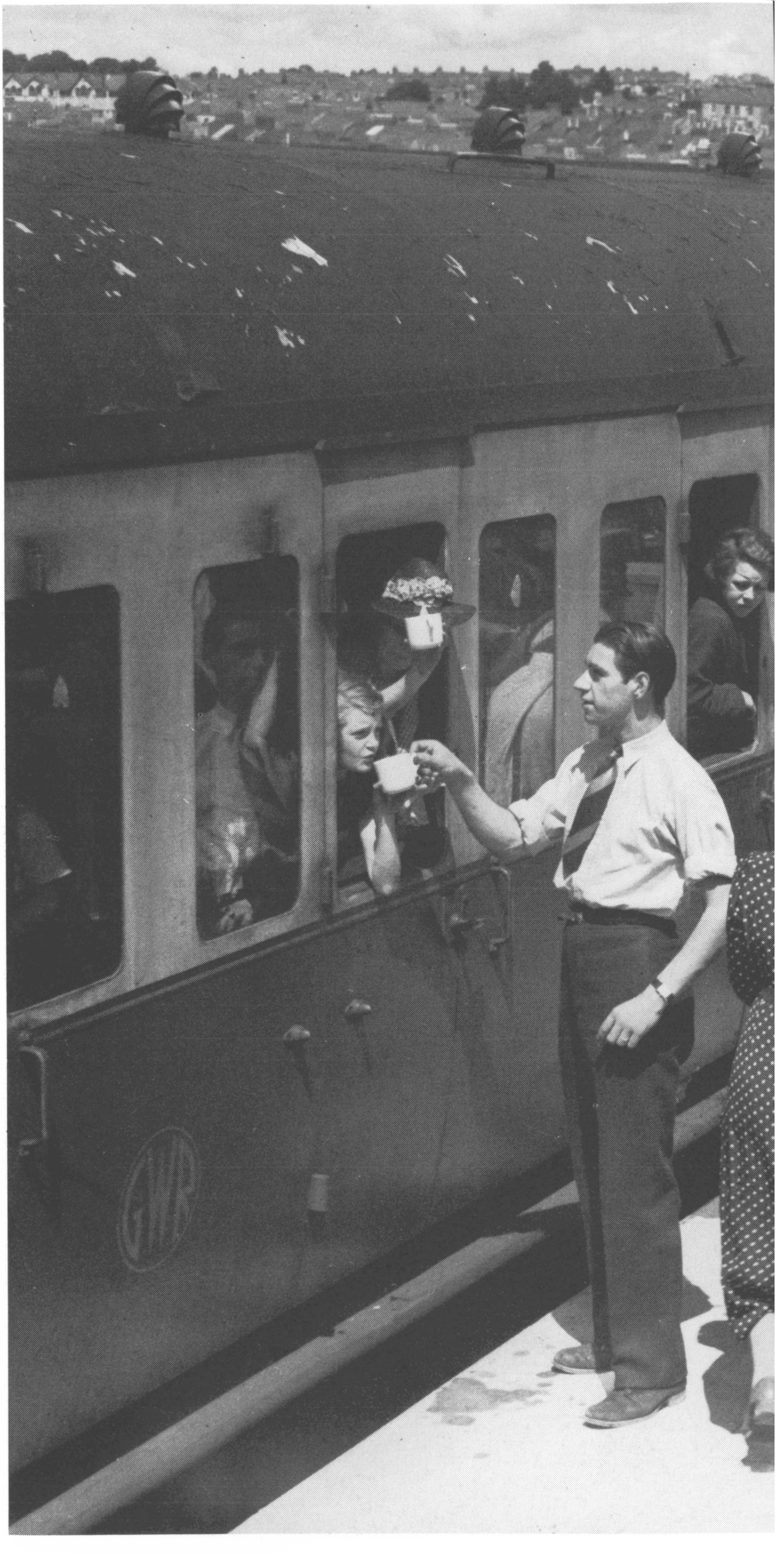
Posters notifying arrival will be displayed at the schools at which the children assemble for evacuation.

The County Hall,
S.E.1

E. M. RICH,
Education Officer

▲ **142**
The war scare at the time of Munich had given the authorities useful experience in evacuating children. Between 1 and 3 September 1939, 1,500,000 mothers and children were evacuated from London with a minimum of fuss.

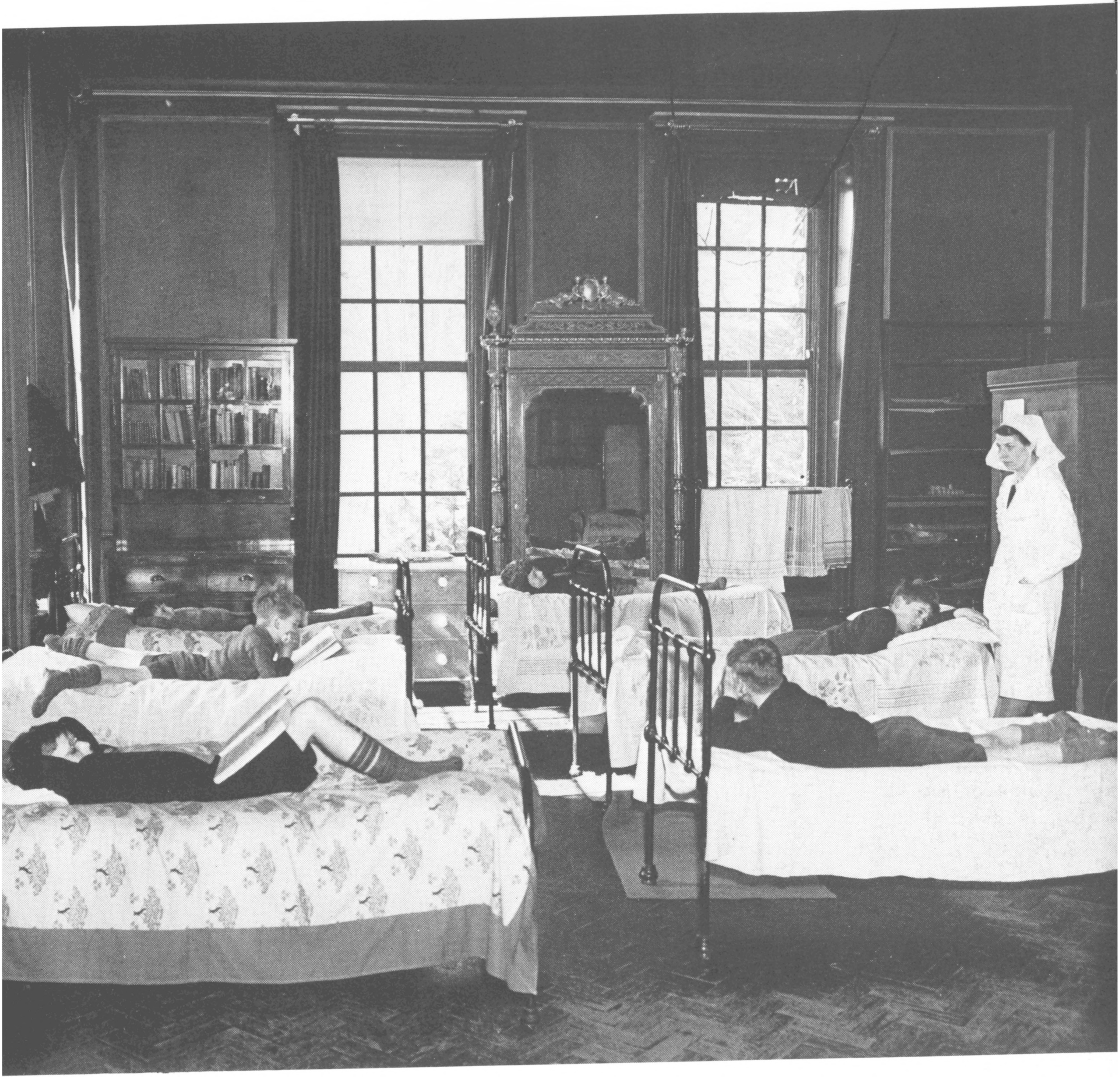
► **143**
The evacuees were not told their destination. These bewildered children, labelled, carrying gas masks and luggage – a change of clothes, nightclothes, washing things and if possible a warm coat or mackintosh – had just arrived at Eastbourne on 1 September. The children tended to settle down better in their new homes when they moved with their teachers and their mothers stayed behind.



144
Refreshment for the evacuees.

THIRD

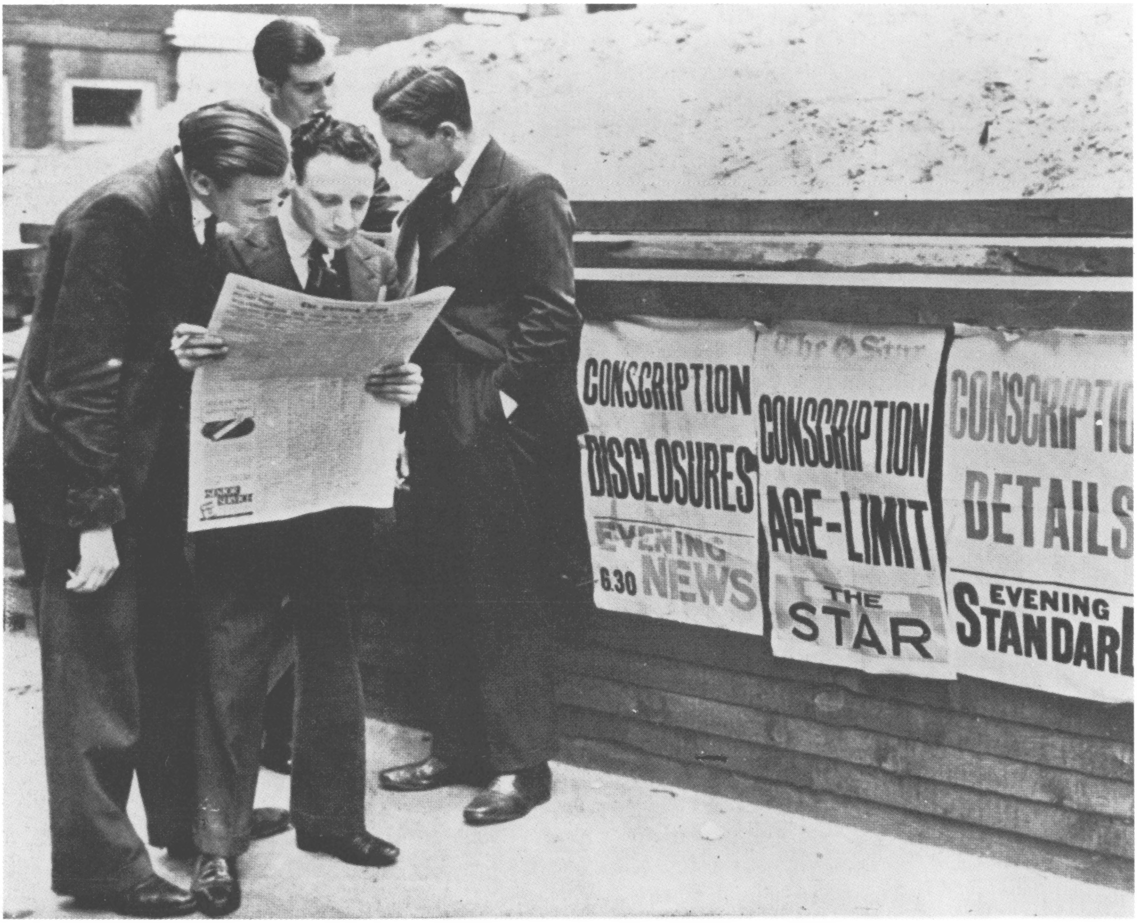
LIFE JACKETS
GOLDEN



◀ **145**
The Gravesend steamer leaving for its destination crowded with children.

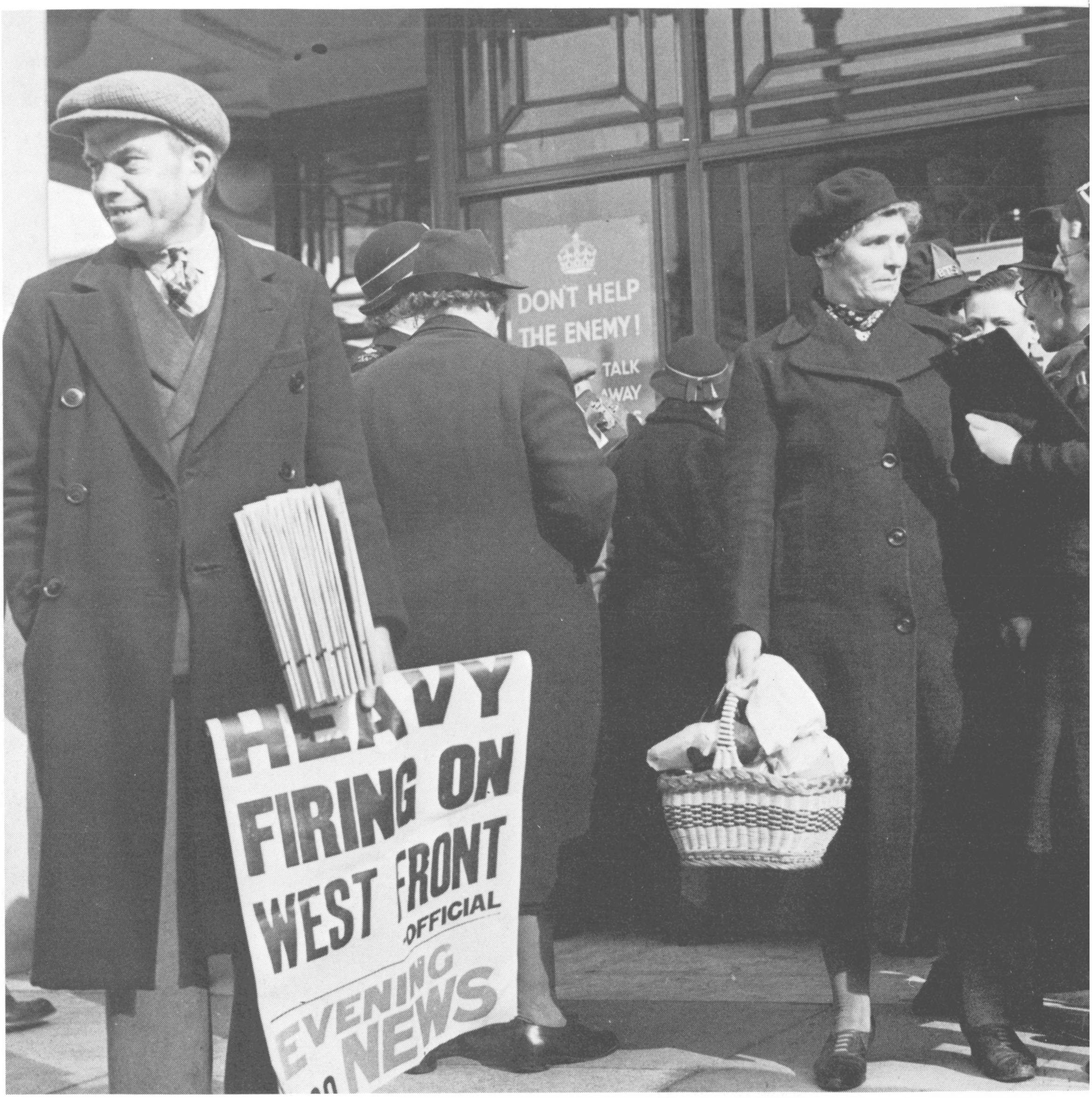
▲ **146**
Large country houses were used to accommodate some children; others were billeted in cottages and farms.

JOINING UP


CONSCRIPTION
DISCLOSURES
EVENING NEWS
6.30
The Star
CONSCRIPTION
AGE-LIMIT
THE STAR
CONSCRIPTIO
DETAILS
EVENING
STANDAR

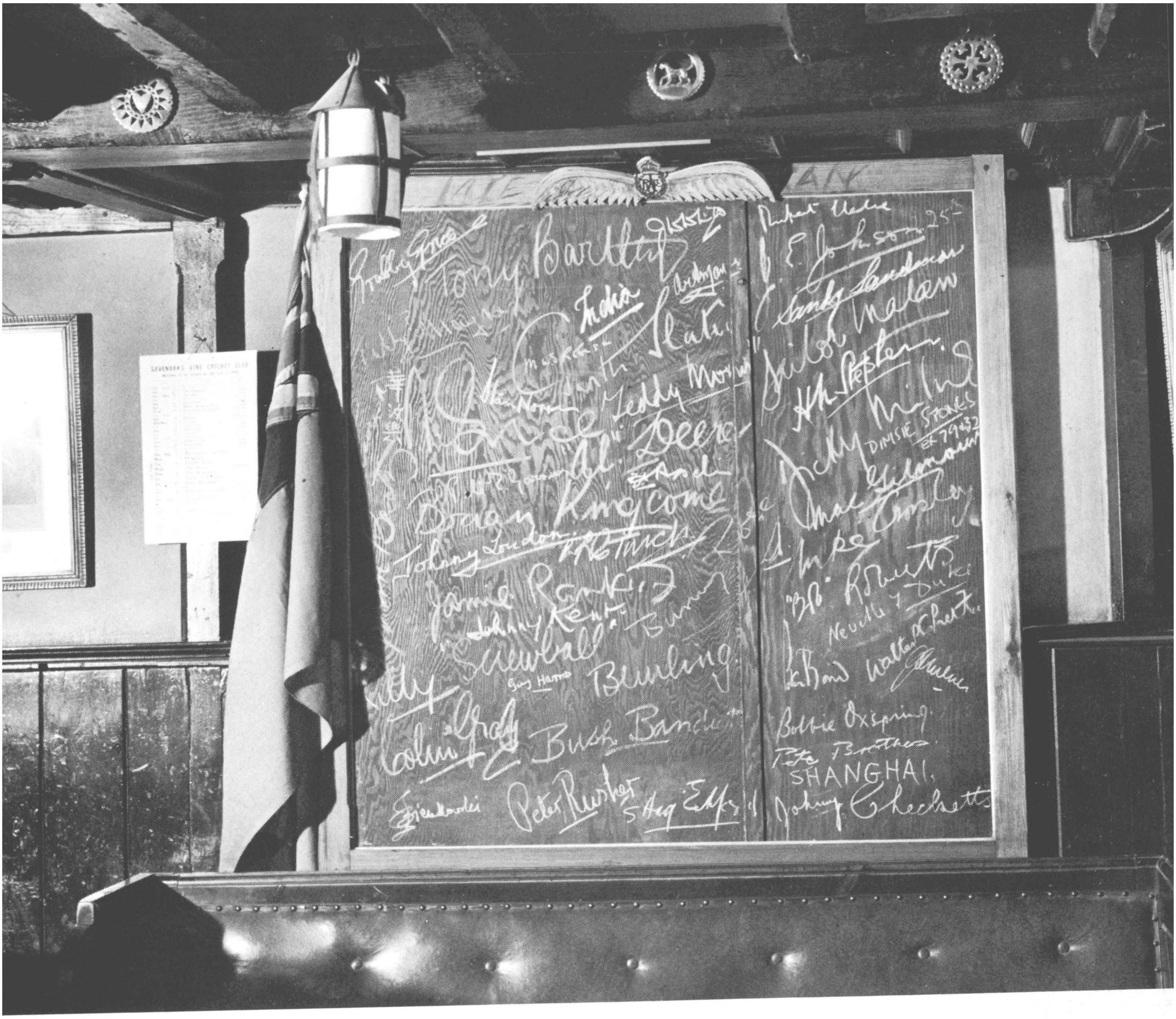
▲ **147**
Conscription, which had been resisted by the Labour and Liberal parties in 1938, finally came into full effect in 1939, when it was introduced for men between the ages of eighteen and forty-one.

▶ **148**
For the older generation, with their memories of 1914, the outbreak of a second World War brought terrible anxiety. The photographer caught the Vicar of Sidcup saying goodbye to his son, a volunteer in the Artists Rifles, on 3 September 1939.


DON'T HELP
THE ENEMY!
TALK
AWAY
HEAVY
FIRING ON
WEST FRONT
OFFICIAL
EVENING
NEWS

▲ **149**
On 10 May 1940, Germany invaded Holland and Belgium. While the placards read 'Heavy Firing on West Front', a blood transfusion service was being organized in London.

▶ **150**
Dutch and Belgian refugees began to arrive in England.

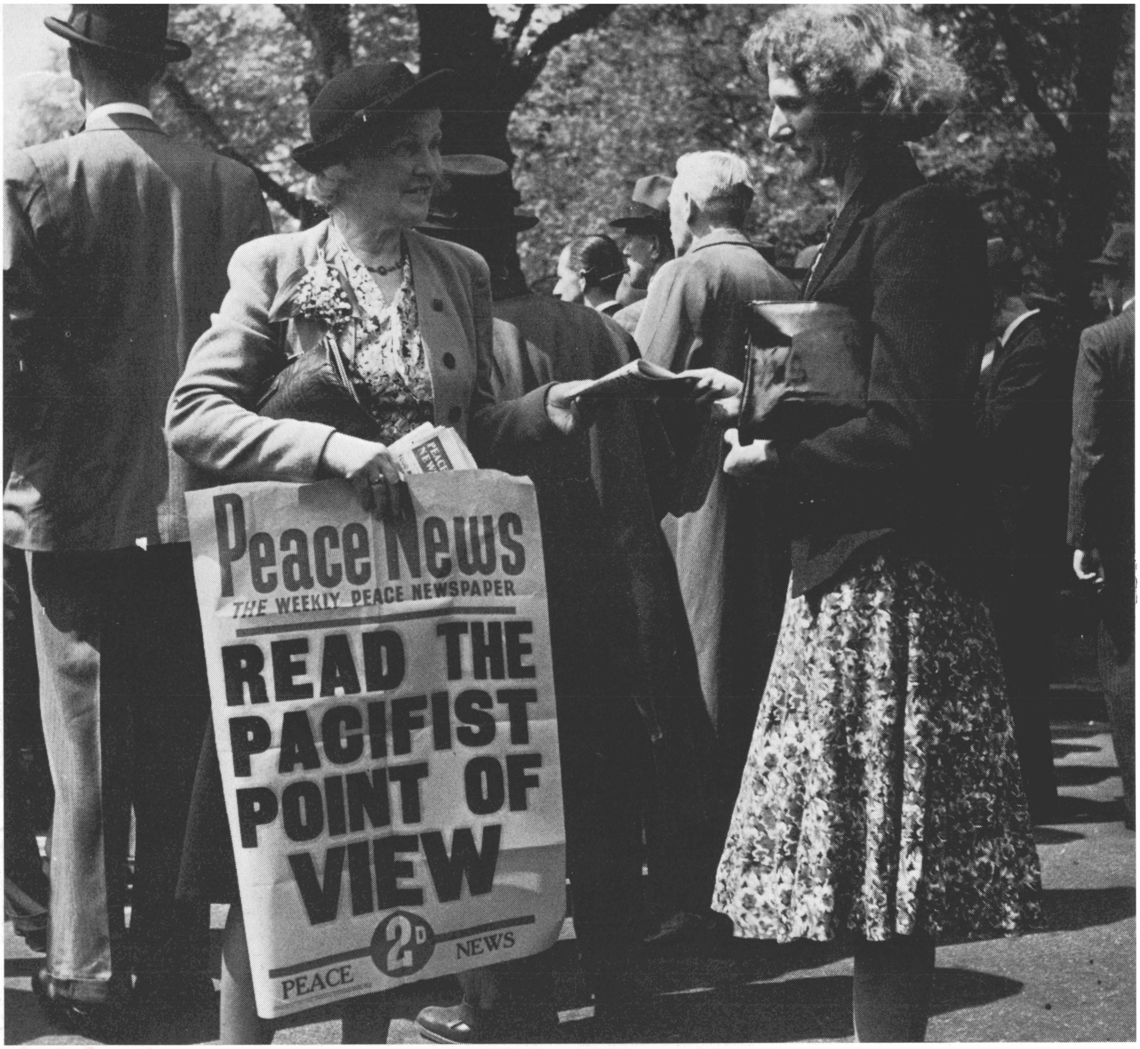


◀ **151**
British soldiers (the C.O. and officers of the Royal Ulster Rifles) waiting on an improvised pier near Dunkirk for a boat to take them to England and safety. Almost all the British Army equipment and ammunition was left behind, but the huge majority of the Expeditionary Force was rescued. The boats which went out to Dunkirk included the Gravesend steamer which had been used to evacuate some of London's children.

▲ **152**
Battle of Britain pilots from Biggin Hill spent many off-duty hours in the White Hart, Brasted, where the board on which they signed their names can still be seen.

CLARENDON
HOTEL
LOUNGE BAR
THE CLARENDON
Tea R

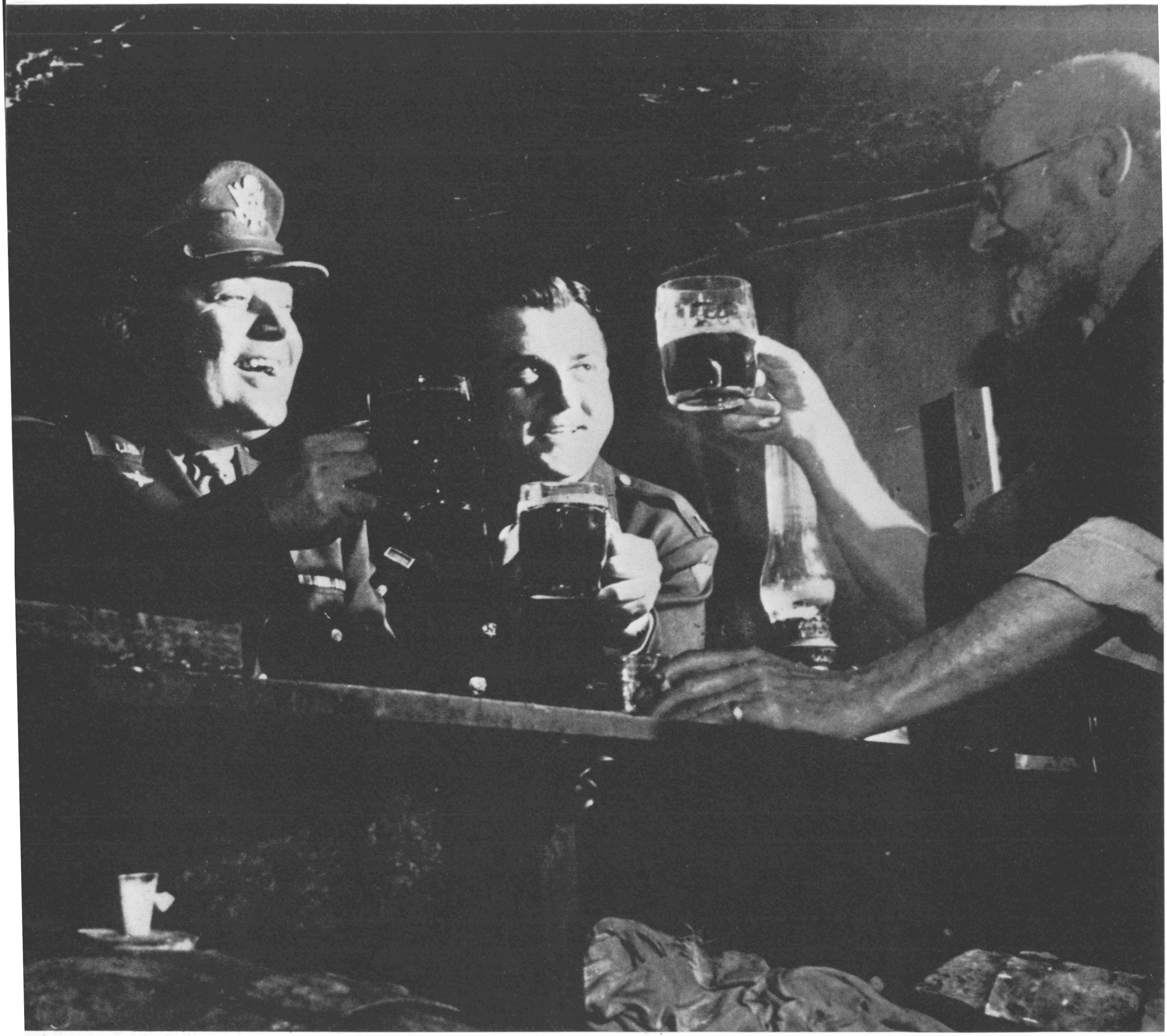
153
The Clarendon Hotel in Deal was used as an army canteen (1943).


Peace News
THE WEEKLY PEACE NEWSPAPER
READ THE PACIFIST POINT OF VIEW
2D
PEACE
NEWS

▲ **154**
Pacifists and conscientious objectors were not treated as badly as they had been in the First World War. Almost 44,000 'conchies' were given exemption. The Pacifist magazine, *Peace News*, was on sale here in 1944.

▶ **155**
America and Germany were at war from 11 December 1941, but American servicemen did not arrive in Britain in force until 1943. American Military Police in Piccadilly, 1943.

PICCADILLY CIRCUS
SWAN & EDGAR LTD
UNDERGROUND
SHELTER
HUNTER WIGGLES
MILITARY POLICE
Decatur
W 20333796
O-LGTH-132 INS
O-HT-69 INS.
L.G.O. HT.-52
O-WIDTH-62 INS
CU. FT.-247 FT.
SHIP WGT.-1.1
CERT. WGT.-2325



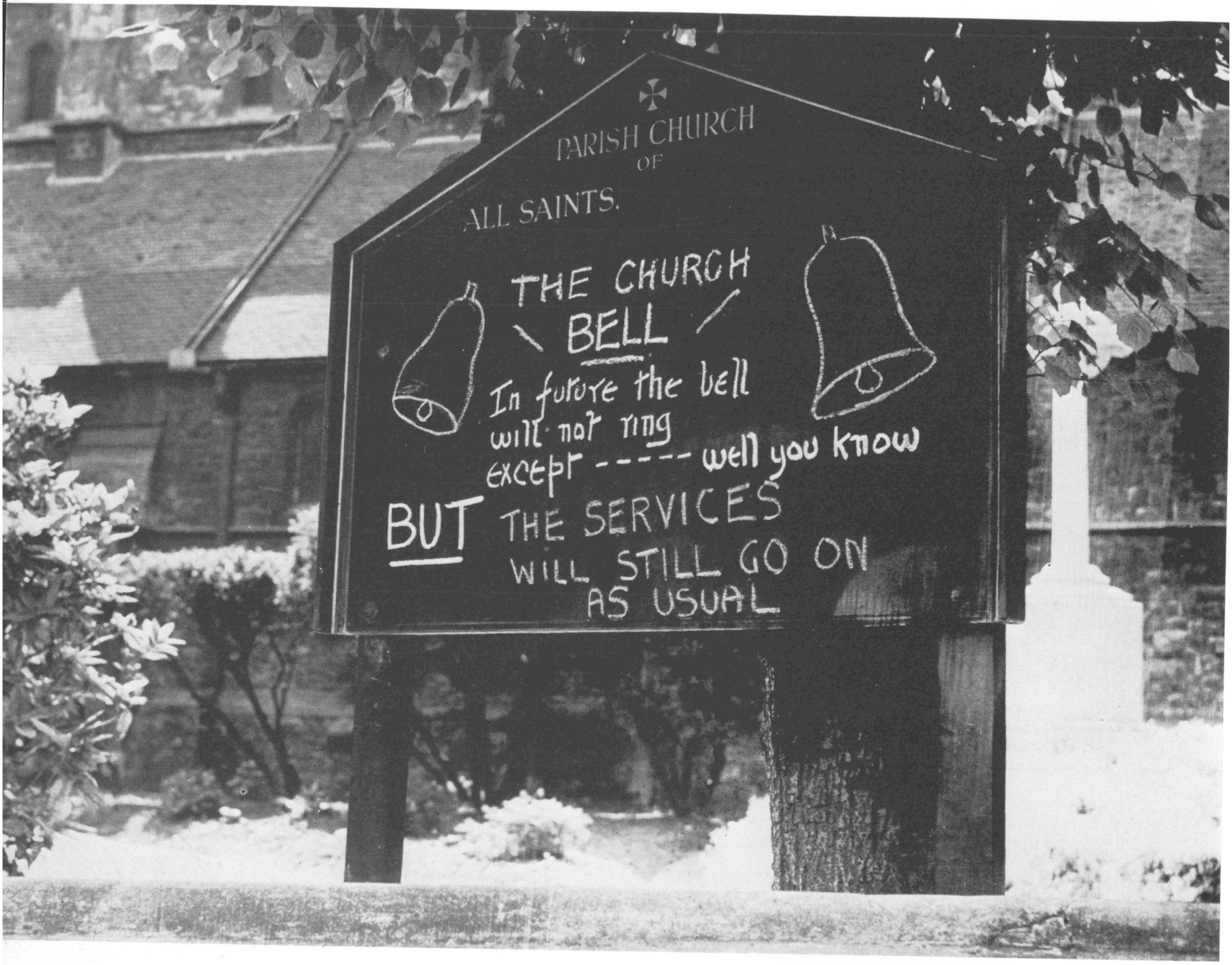
▲ 156
American airforcemen having a final pint in their local before leaving England in 1945.

► 157
A sad farewell between an American air-force sergeant and his girlfriend, a British aircraftwoman. Many US servicemen married British girls.

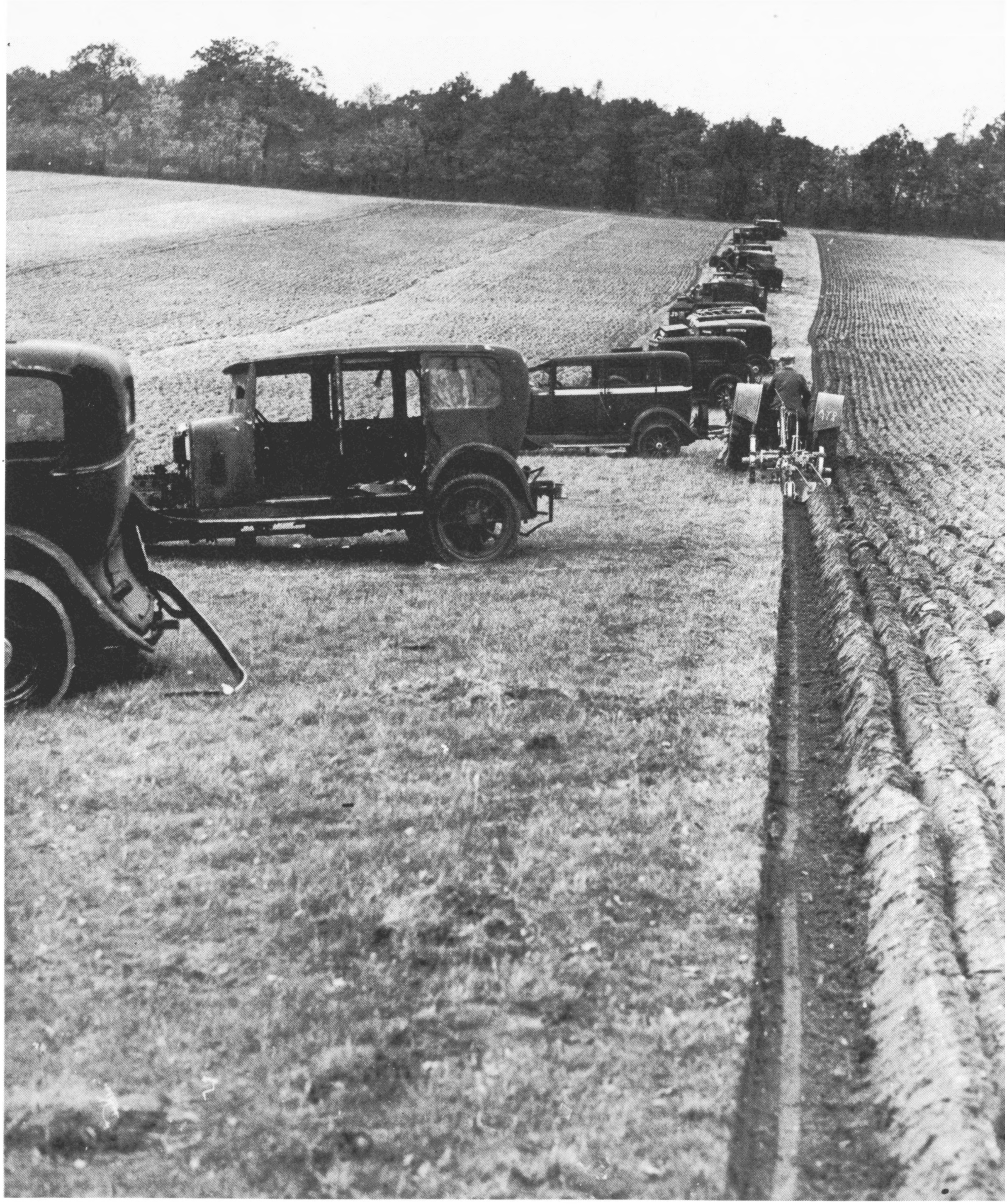
BRITAIN ALONE

158
On 14 May 1940 Anthony Eden broadcast an appeal for citizens between the ages of fifteen and sixty-five to join the Local Defence Volunteers (the LDV), soon to be renamed the Home Guard. In six weeks a million men had enrolled; more than 50 per cent had served in the First World War.

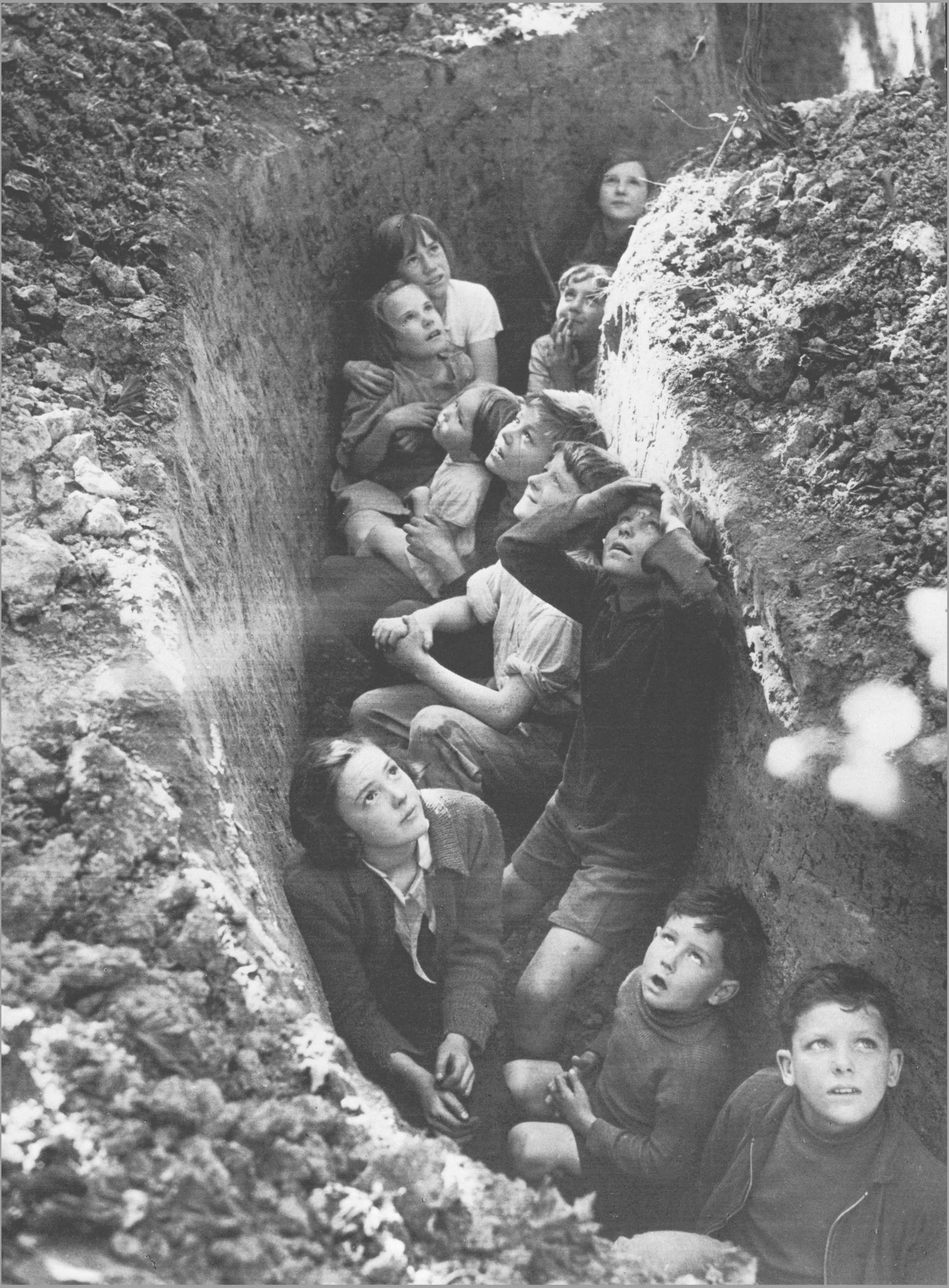
159
In the early days of the Home Guard there was only one gun for every ten men. Volunteers drilled in civilian clothes, carrying sticks. America sent 800,000 rifles in the summer of 1940; there was then one rifle to every three men and there was also an assortment of grenades, shot-guns and Brownings.


PARISH CHURCH
OF
ALL SAINTS.
THE CHURCH
BELL
In future the bell
will not ring
except ----- well you know
BUT THE SERVICES
WILL STILL GO ON
AS USUAL

160
The board outside Gravesend Parish Church, 1940. All place-names which could have helped invading troops were removed by Government order in May 1940 and in case of invasion the church bells would ring. On 7 September it was assumed that the invasion had begun, the church bells rang out their warning and some attempts were made to blow up bridges and railway stations before it was realized that it was a false alarm.

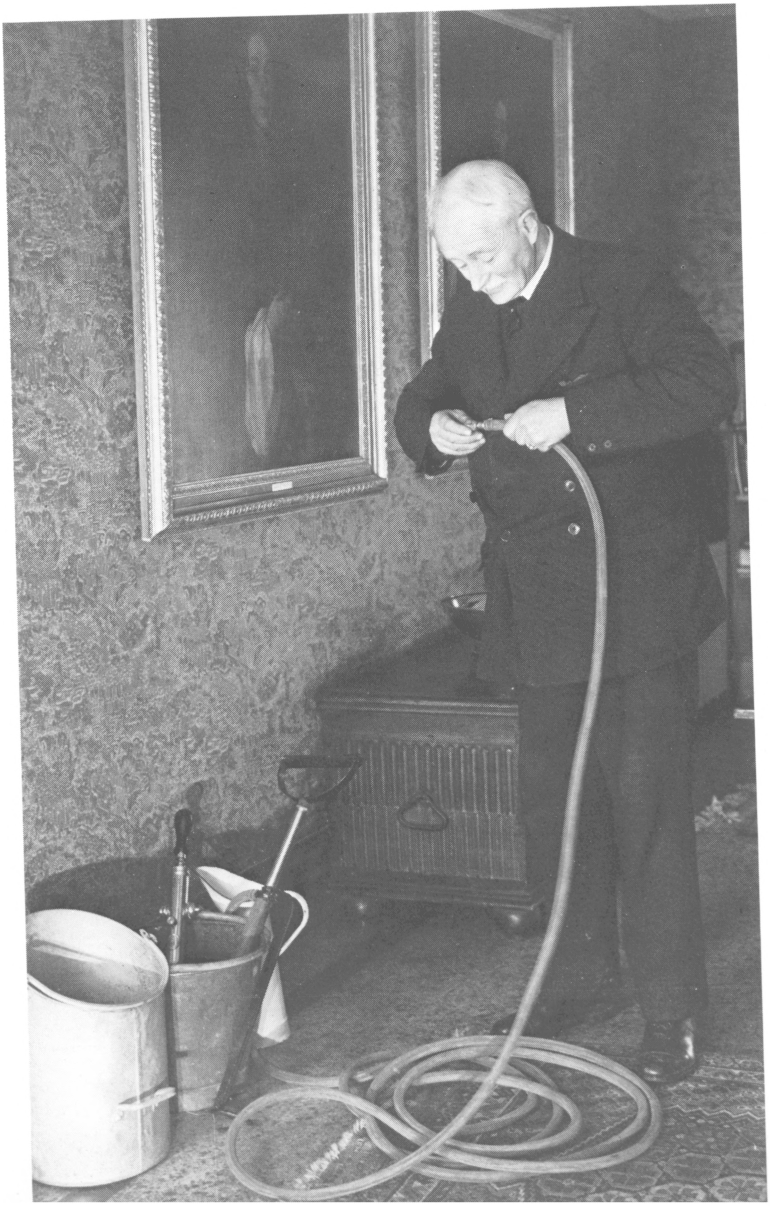


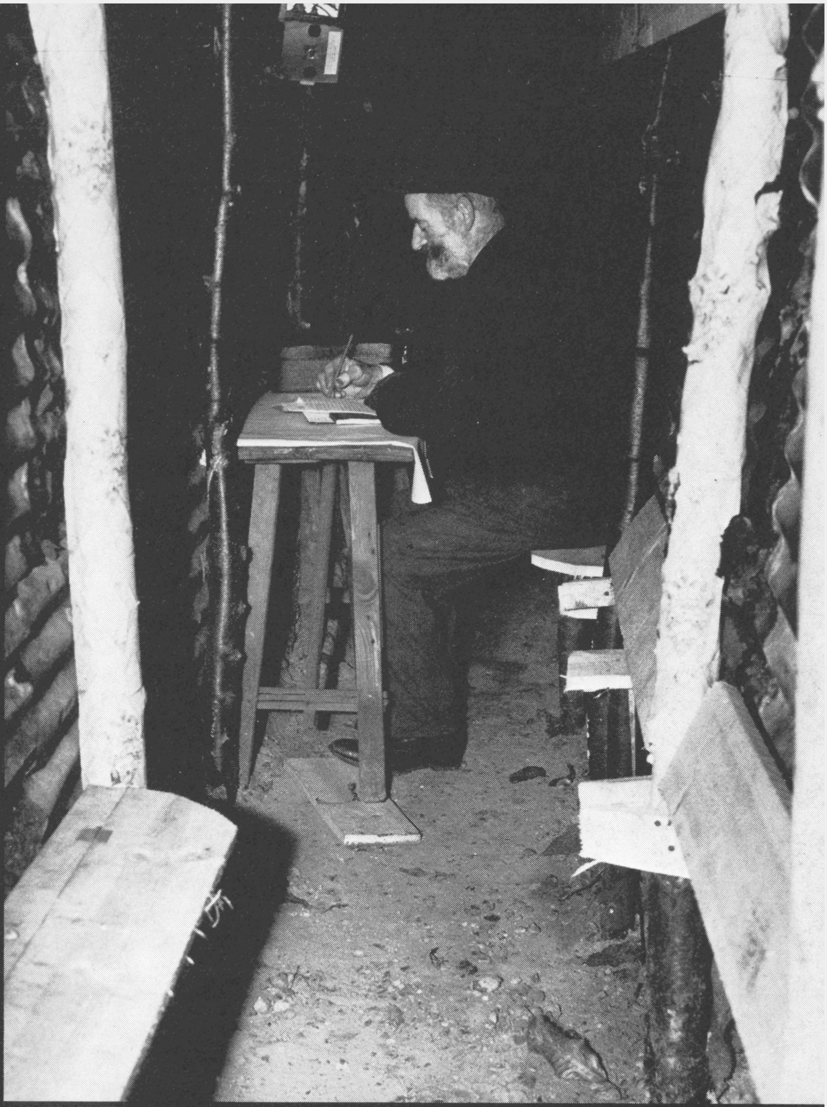
161
Old cars were strung across fields so that they could not be used as landing grounds by enemy aircraft.



◀ **162**
Trenches were dug in the Kentish hopfields so that pickers and their families could take refuge during the Battle of Britain. *Life* magazine said, 'This is the most human picture of the war' and it was displayed, greatly enlarged, in the British Embassy in Washington.

▼ **163**
Firemen and wardens trained the public to use stirrup pumps. Here the Poet Laureate, John Masefield, was learning to use the nozzle which could be adjusted either to spray an incendiary bomb or to direct a jet at a fire. Three people were needed: one used the nozzle, one did the pumping and one fetched fresh water supplies.





◀ **164**

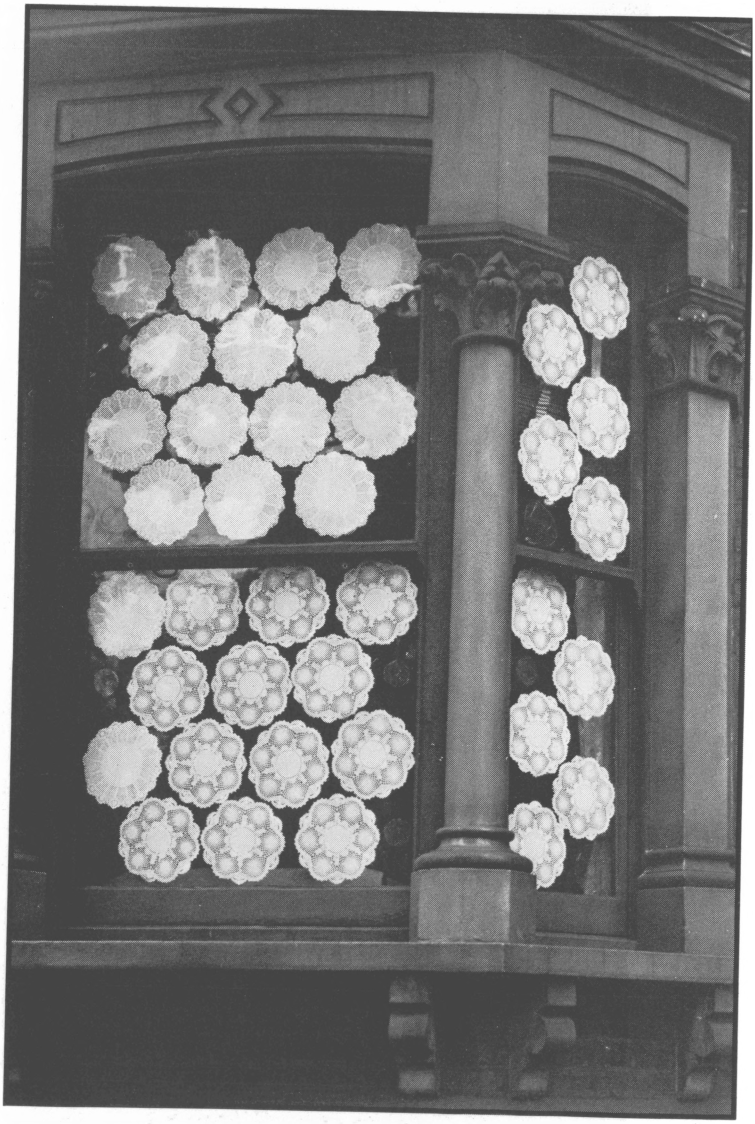
By early September 1939 a million and a half Anderson shelters (named after Sir John Anderson) had been distributed in London, free of charge to those whose income was below £250 a year. They were sunk three feet into the ground, and many people used the roof to grow flowers or vegetables. They saved many lives; of Londoners who used shelters, more than half

▲ **165**

This seventy-six-year-old pensioner made a shelter thirty feet long, twelve feet below ground, covered by a mound of earth and concrete eight feet high. He provided seats for twenty people and installed electric light; he constructed the whole thing entirely on his own.

▼ **166**
Flying glass was a real danger the owner of this house used paper cake mats to make the windows splinter proof.

▶ **167**
Of all air raid precautions, the blackout caused the greatest inconvenience and hardship. Blackout houses were hot and stuffy in summer and often had to remain dark all day.

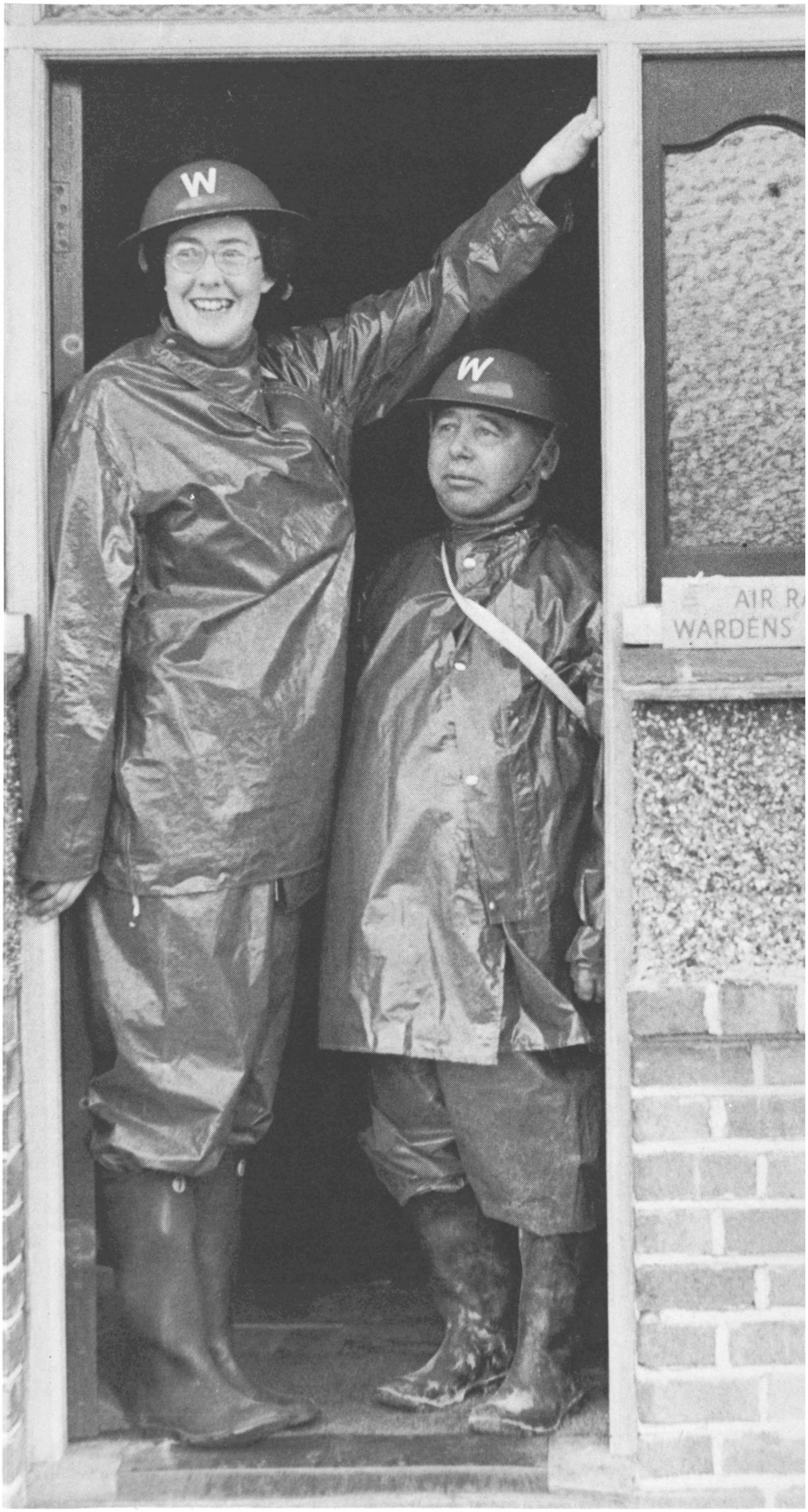


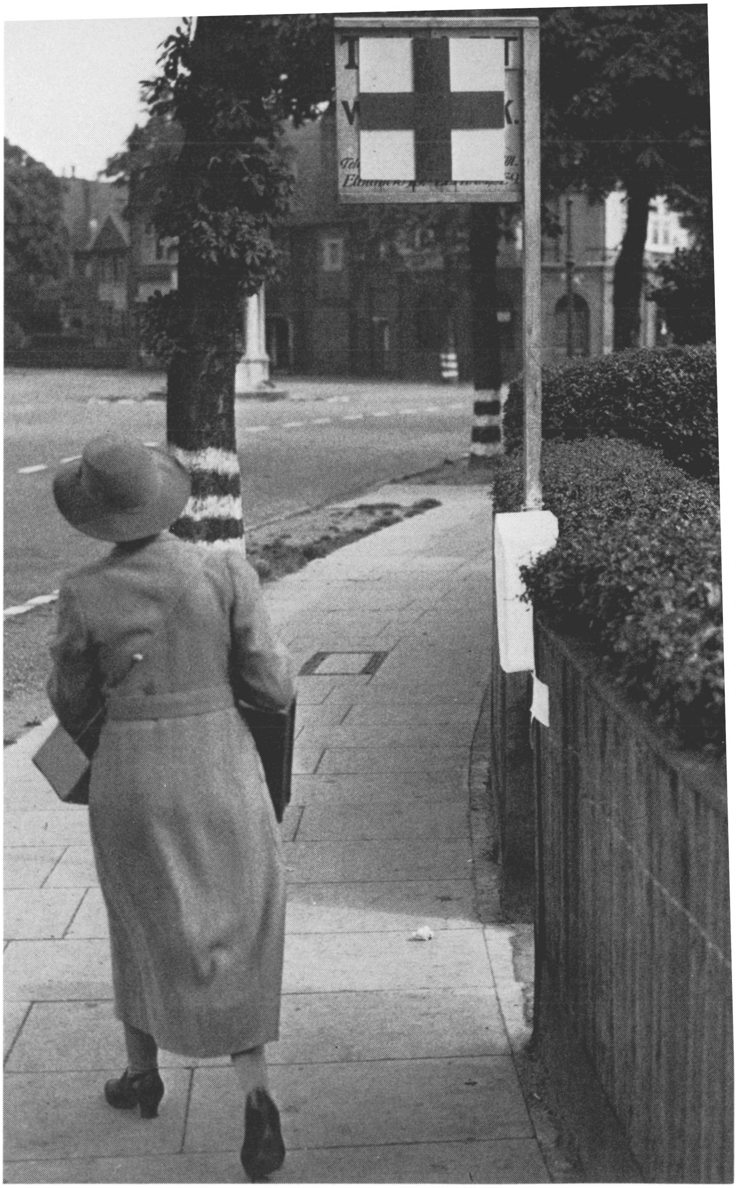
BLACK OUT TO-DAY

▼ **168**
Road accidents were, not unnaturally, common in the blackout. Pedestrians were advised to wear white, or smoke so that they could be seen. Luminous flowers were an ingenious answer to the problem.

▶ **169**
Wardens were enrolled, both men and women. Between three and six wardens belonged to each wardens' post and were responsible for a district of about five hundred people. They had to make sure blackout regulations were observed, check gas masks, train the public to deal with incendiary bombs, report bomb damage and give warning in case of bomb attack.

LUMINOUS
DRESS WEAR 6D EACH
GLOWS IN THE DARK
FOR BLACK-OUT NIGHTS
LUMINOUS DRESS WEAR 6D EACH

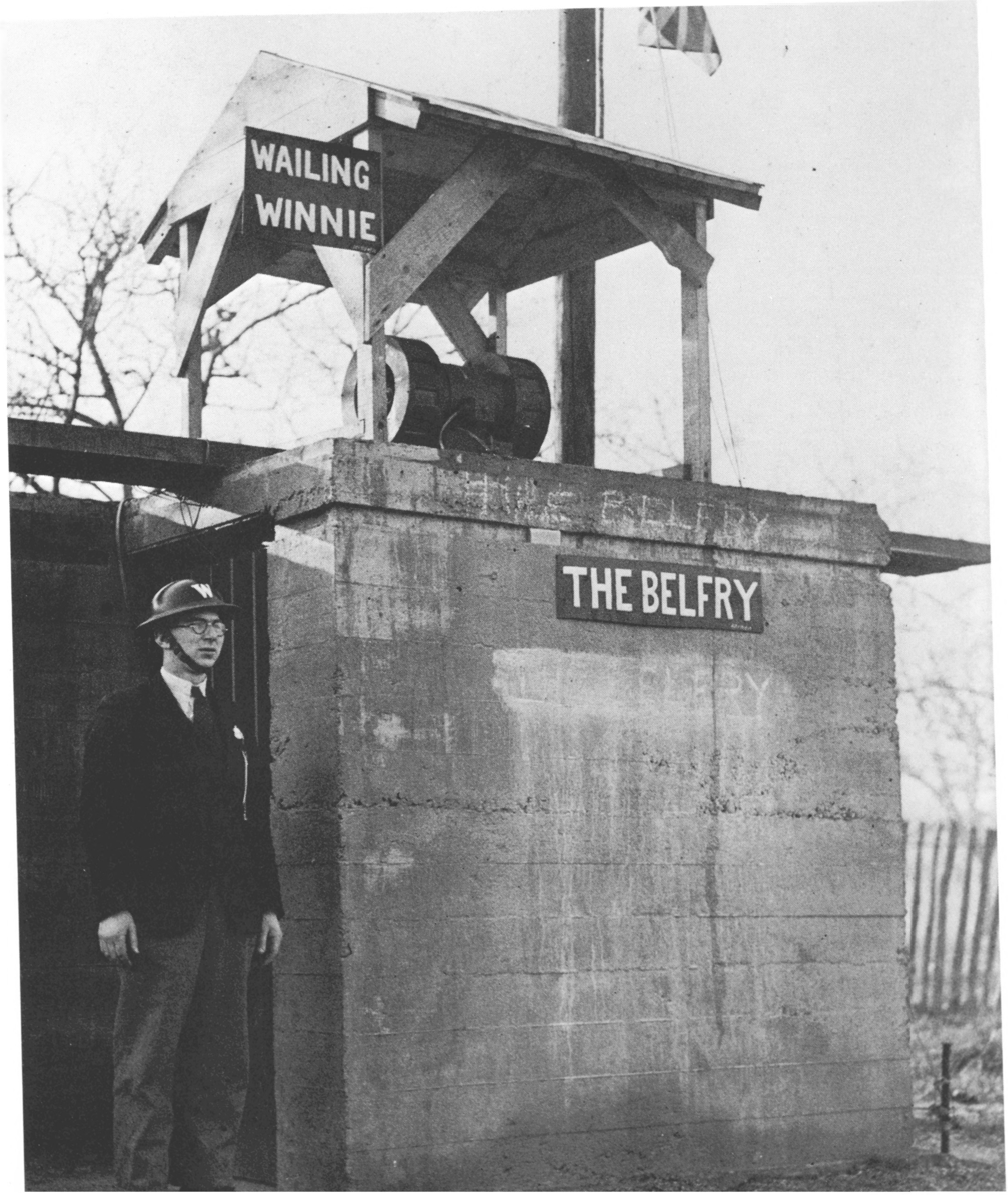

W
W
AIR RA
WARDENS'



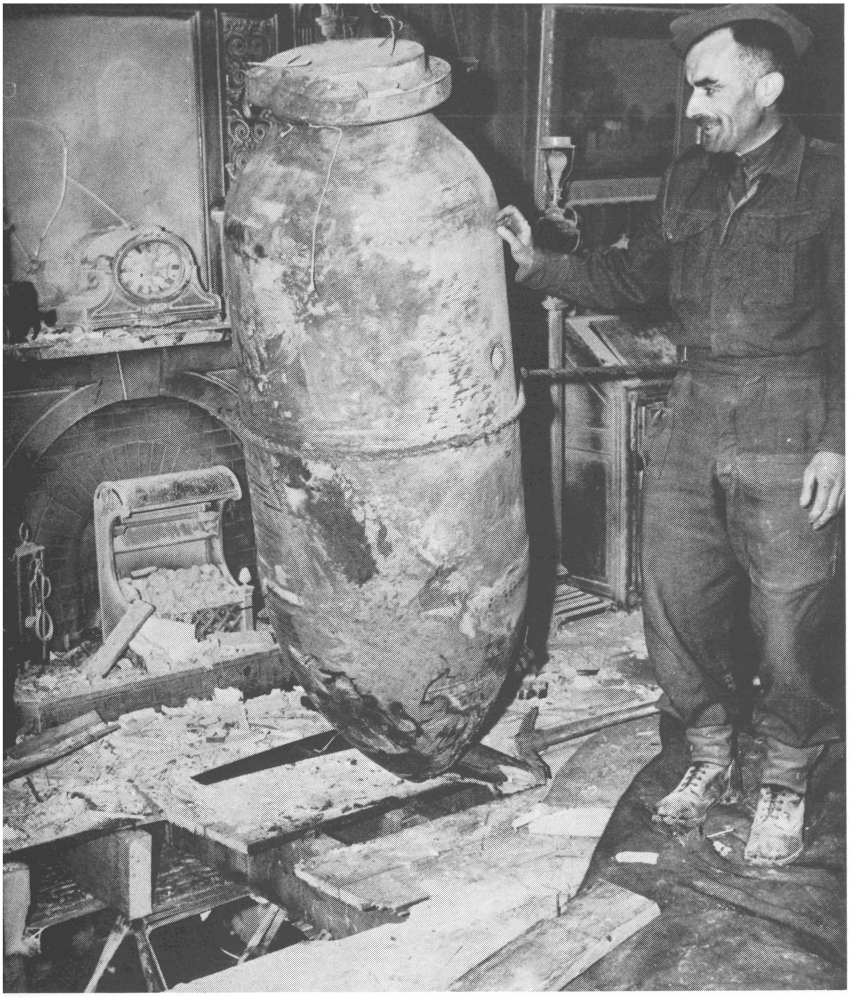
▲ **170**
Empty houses were commandeered for all kinds of uses – first aid posts, fire alarm stations, billets for soldiers. Trees with white circles were blackout aids.

► **171**
No one who heard the wail of the air raid warning siren will ever forget the sound. Wailing Winnie, flying the Union Jack, was in South London.

THE BLITZ

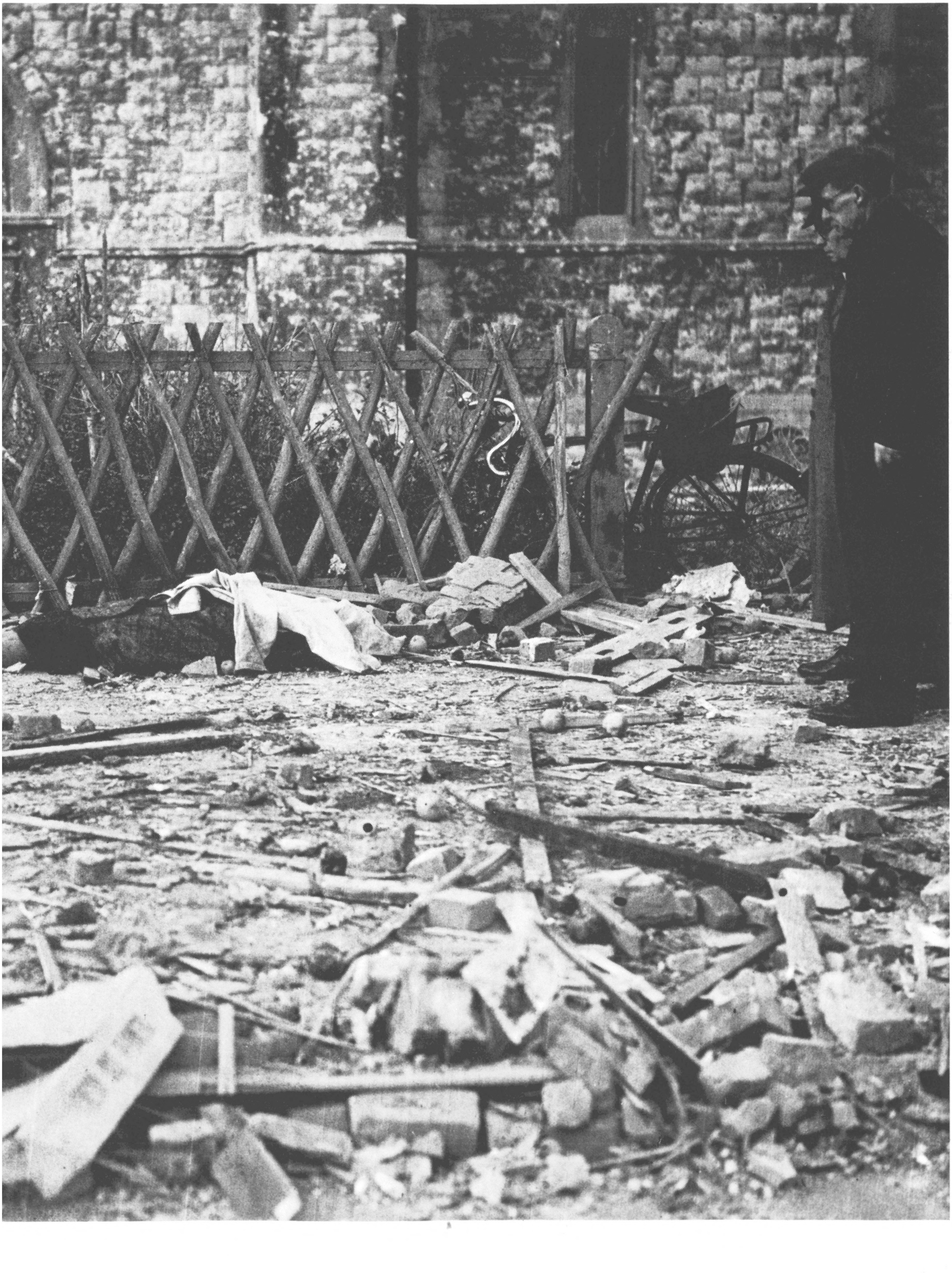

WAILING WINNIE
THE BELFRY
W

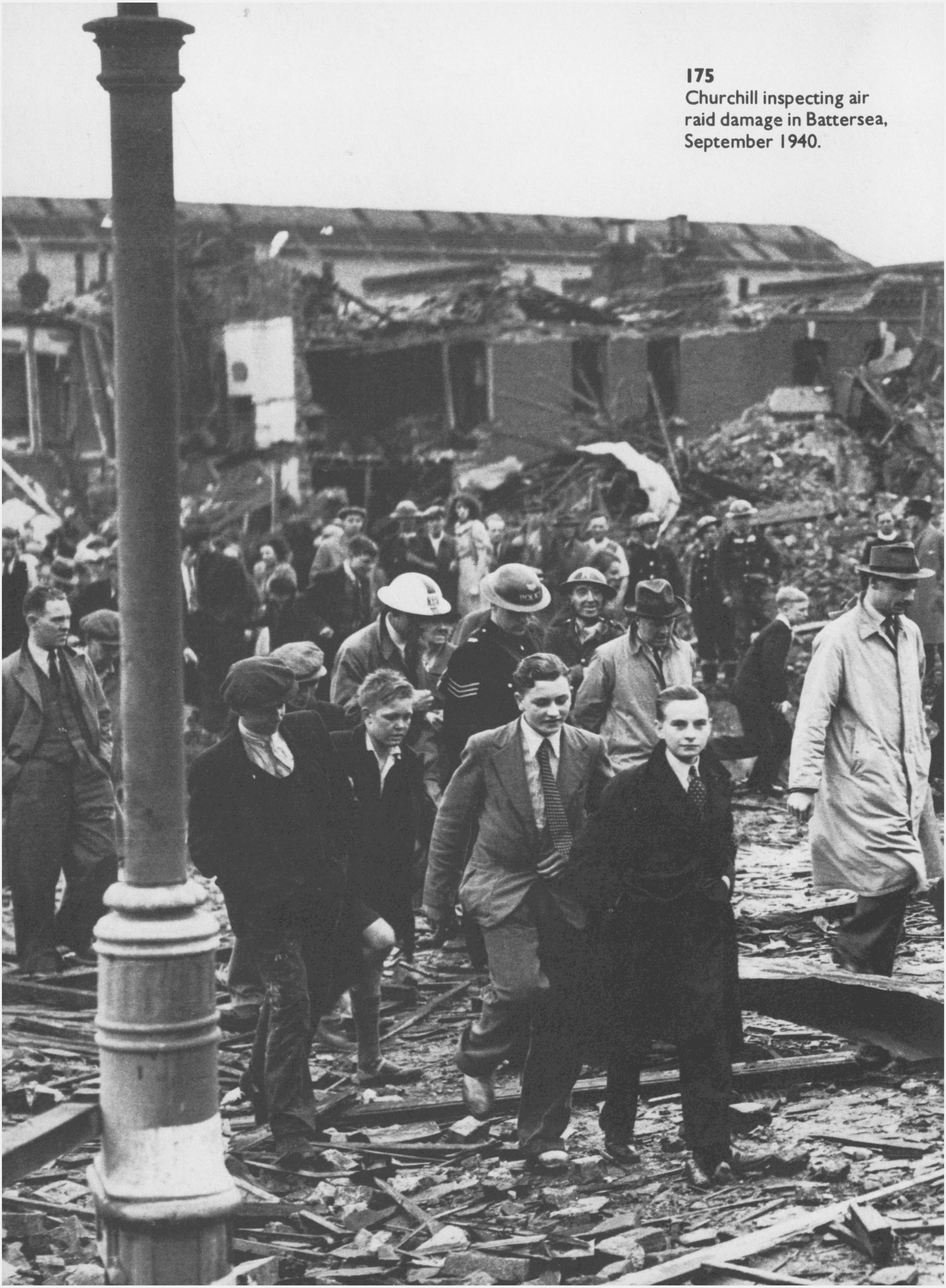
172
Wardens, resented in early days for their bossiness (it was rumoured that they spent their time playing darts) came into their own when the Blitz began in earnest on 7 September 1940.



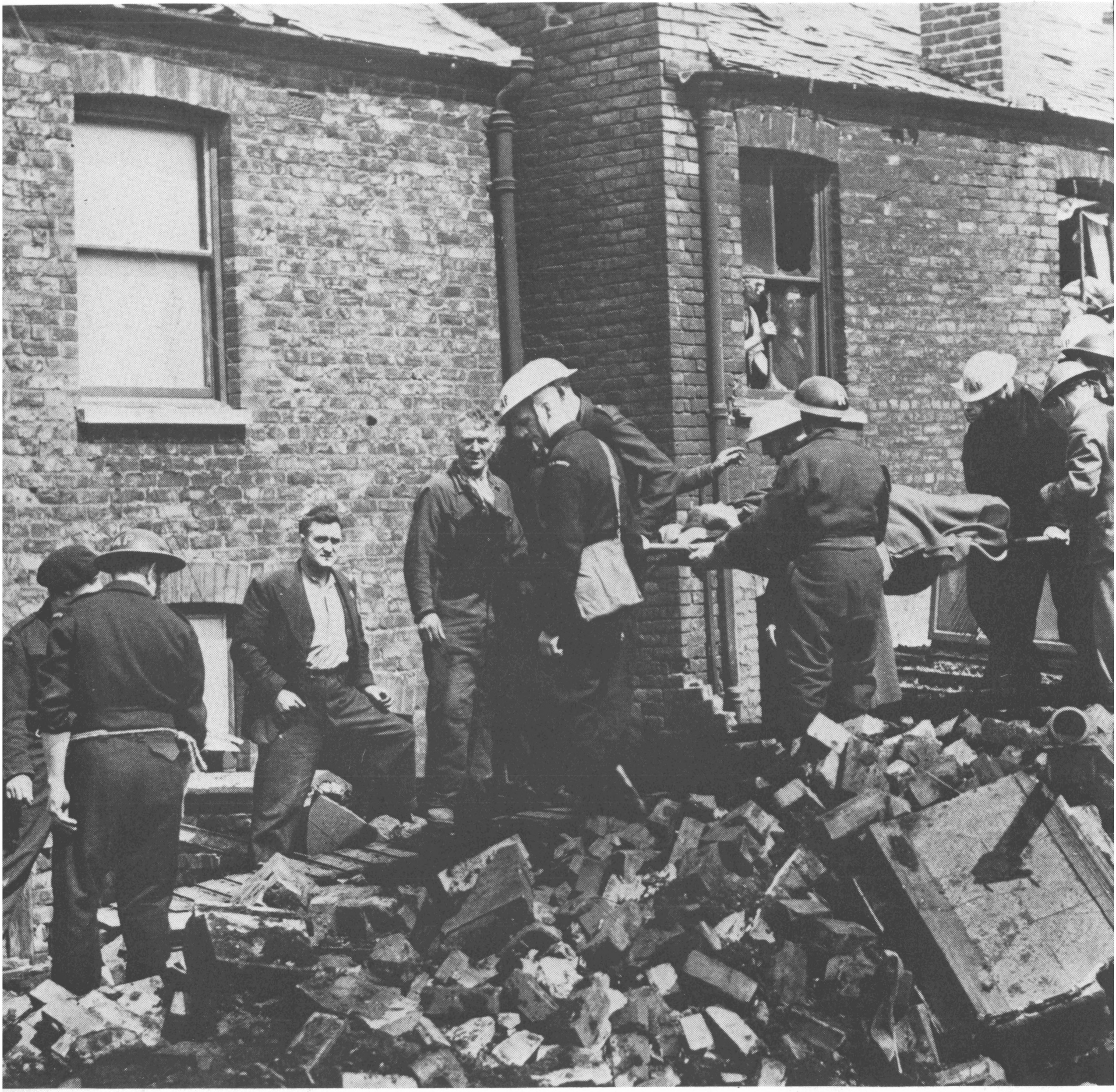
▲ **173**
Unexploded bombs landed in the most surprising places and had to be defused – by the end of the war more than 50,000 unexploded bombs had been dealt with.

▶ **174**
Between September 1940 and May 1941 20,000 Londoners were killed and 70,000 injured, 25,000 seriously. In the rest of Britain a further 23,000 died. Few pictures like this were taken as there was no chance of the censor allowing publication; propaganda pictures were more common.



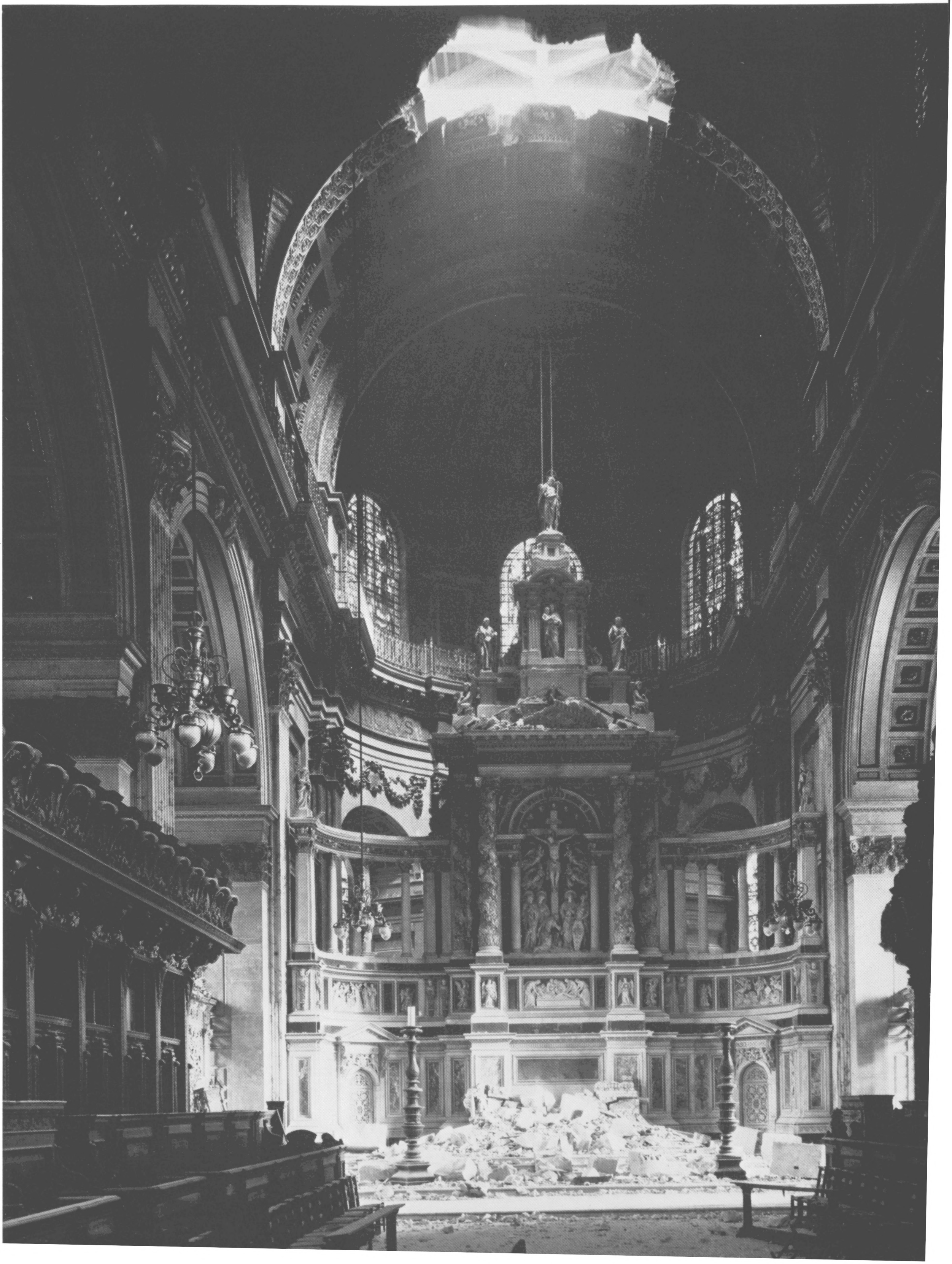


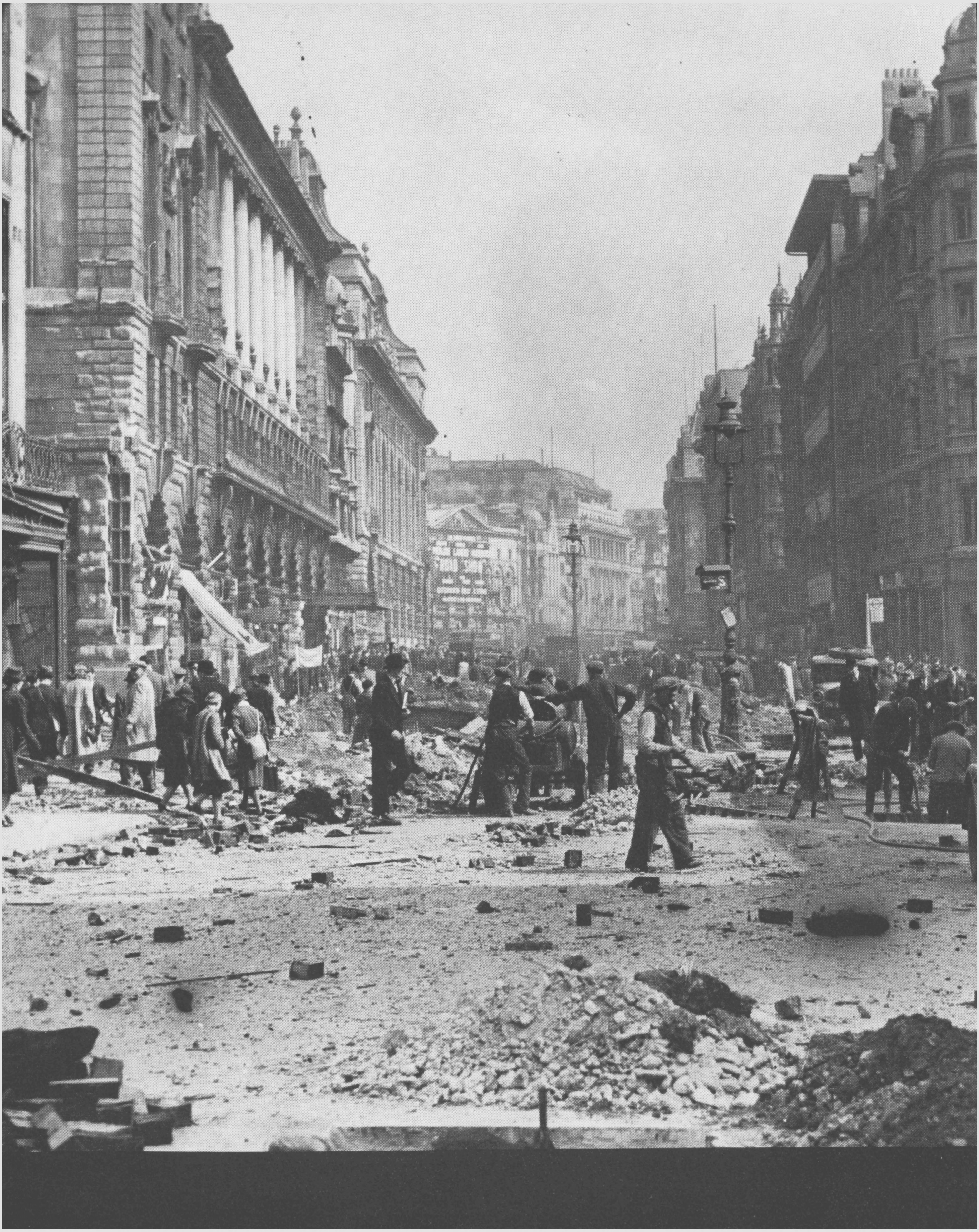
175
Churchill inspecting air raid damage in Battersea, September 1940.



▲ **176**
Casualty and rescue workers in Manchester 1940.

► **177**
The damaged High Altar and gaping roof of St Paul's Cathedral after an air raid in October 1940.

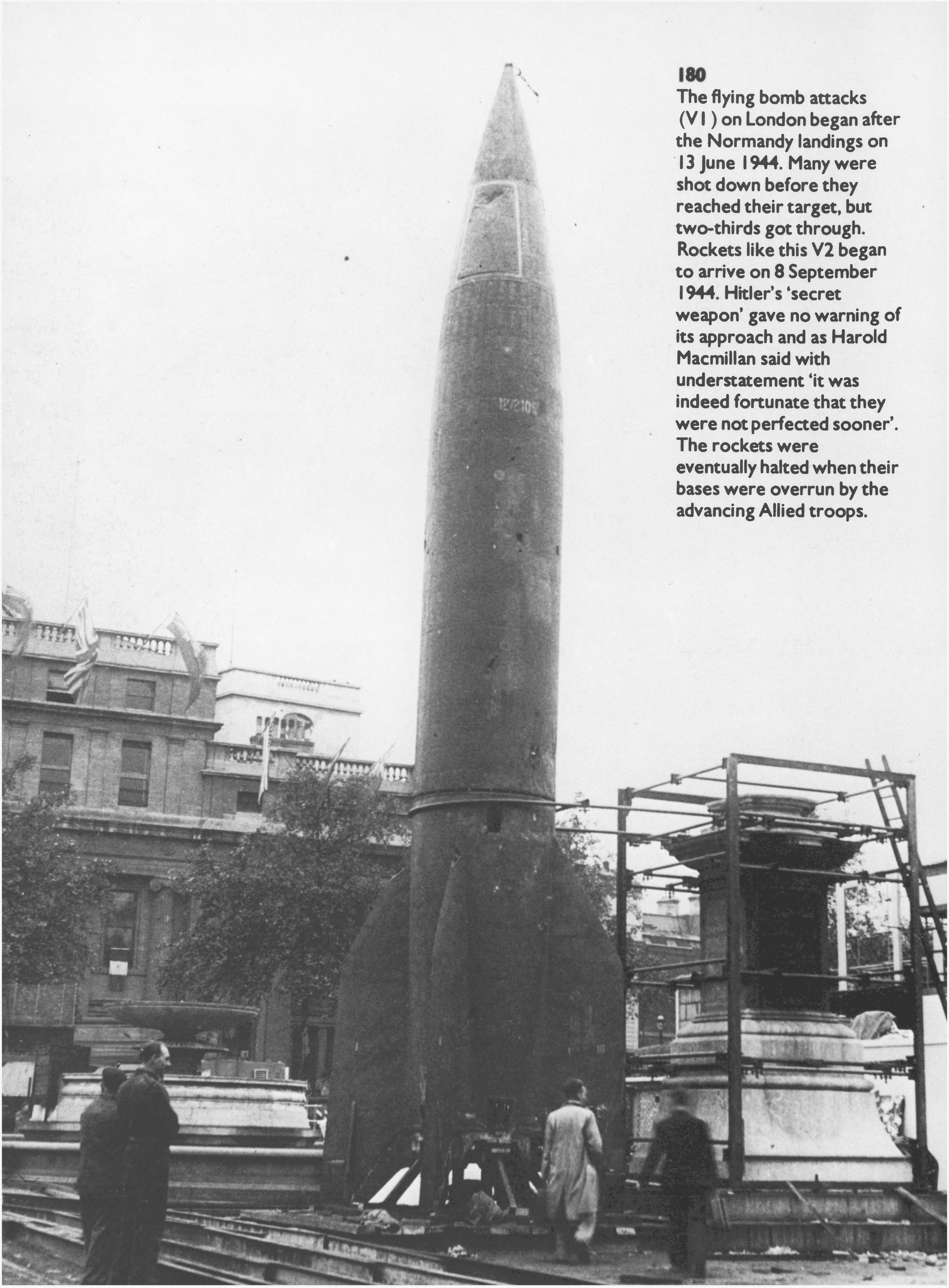



ROAD SHOW

ISH LINEN BANK
REPAIR PARTY
MET. WATER BOARD

◀ **178**
London, due to its size, could continue to function through the worst that the bombs could do, but the devastation was terrifying. By the end of May 1941 one in six Londoners had been made homeless at one time or another. The worst raid on London was on 10 May 1941 when 1,450 people died and the Tower, Westminster Abbey and the House of Commons were hit. This was the scene in Piccadilly.

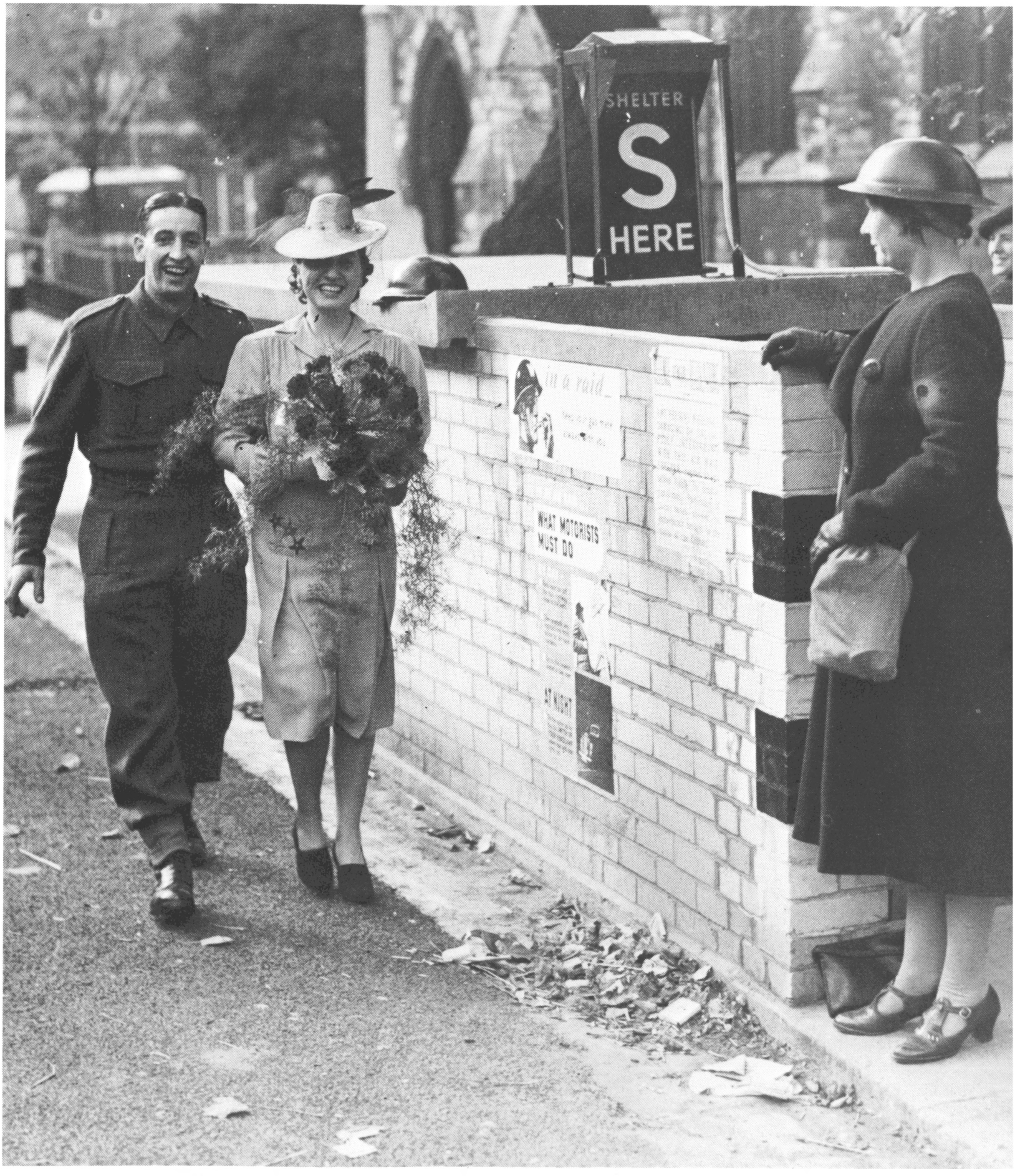
▲ **179**
Coventry, 14 November 1940 gave a new word to the German language – ‘Coventrieren’ or ‘Coventrate’.

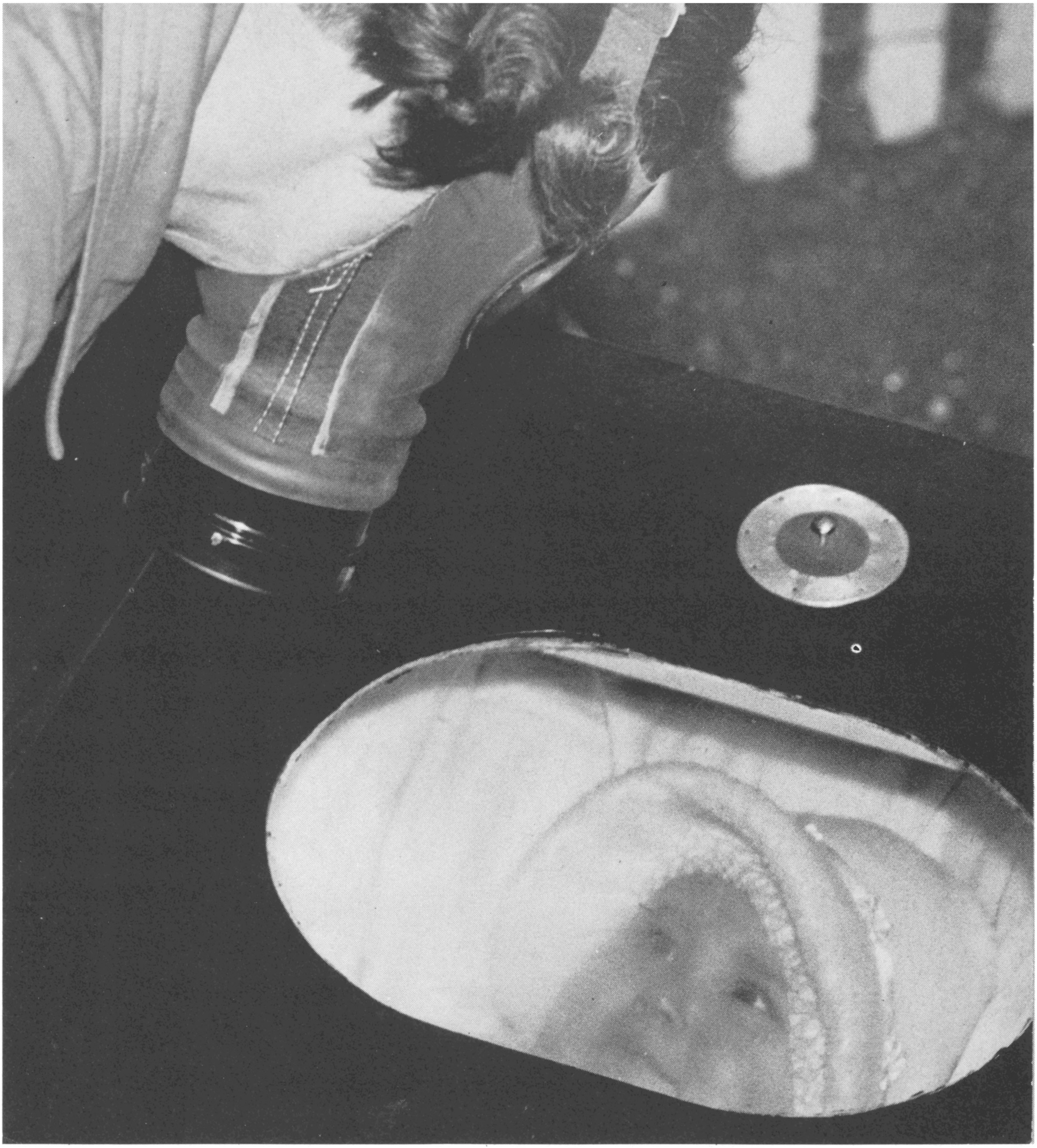


180

The flying bomb attacks (V1) on London began after the Normandy landings on 13 June 1944. Many were shot down before they reached their target, but two-thirds got through. Rockets like this V2 began to arrive on 8 September 1944. Hitler's 'secret weapon' gave no warning of its approach and as Harold Macmillan said with understatement 'it was indeed fortunate that they were not perfected sooner'. The rockets were eventually halted when their bases were overrun by the advancing Allied troops.

181
Wartime wedding. The reception was held in the air raid shelter.


SHELTER
S
HERE
in a raid
WHAT MOTORISTS MUST DO
AT NIGHT



◀ **182**
At the outbreak of war, the chief fear had been of gas attack and gas masks were distributed by all available means.

▲ **183**
Gas-proof containers were made for children too young to wear masks.

◀ **184**
When the bombing started in earnest, the air raid shelter became a way of life. Bunks, eiderdowns, reading lights, warmth and company helped to make the nights tolerable.

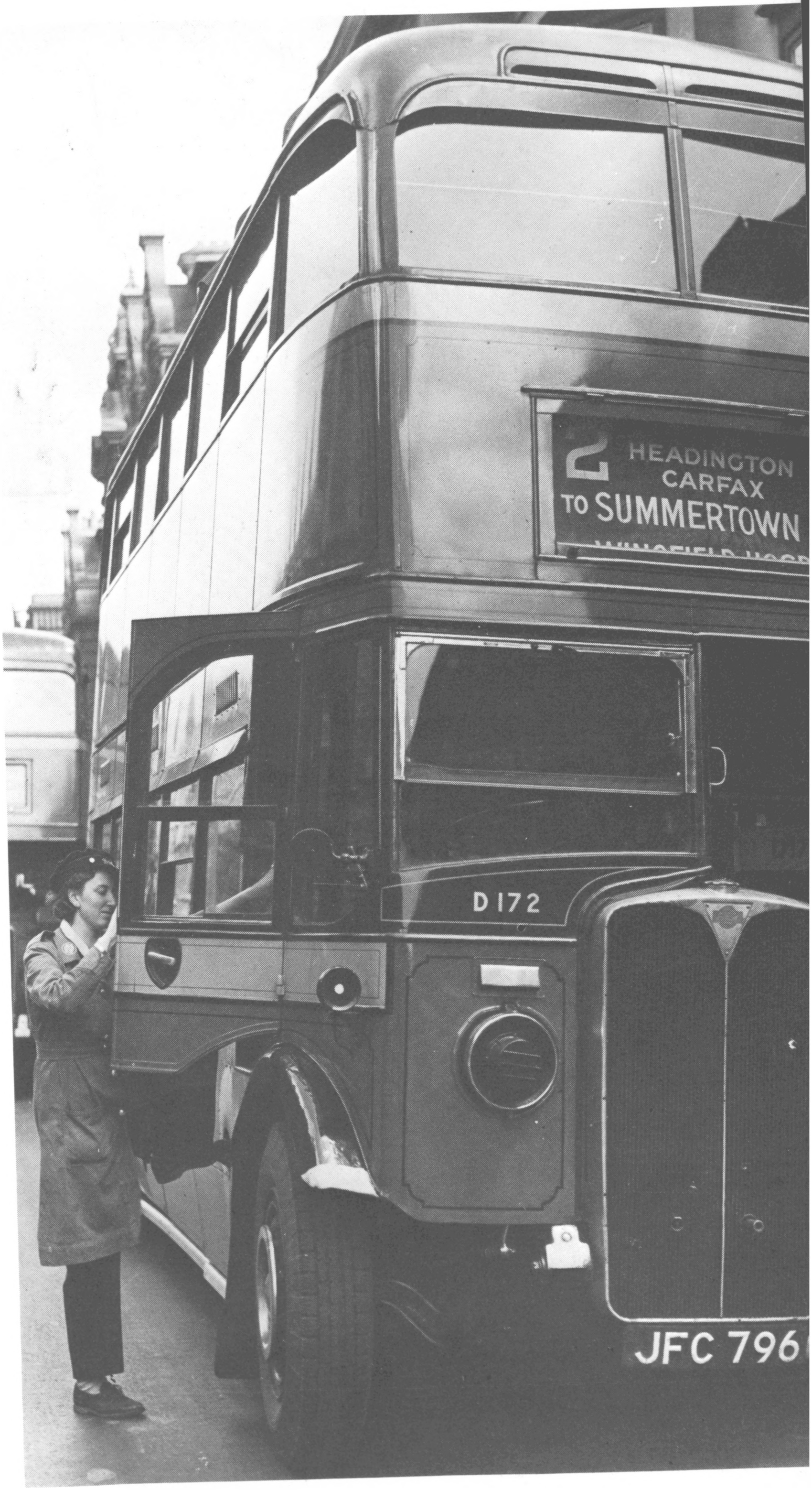
▼ **185**
Christmas in Oxford Street shelter, 1940.

MERRY
XMA
ENS

▶ **186**
The tube station at the British Museum was used as a children's play centre as well as an air raid shelter.

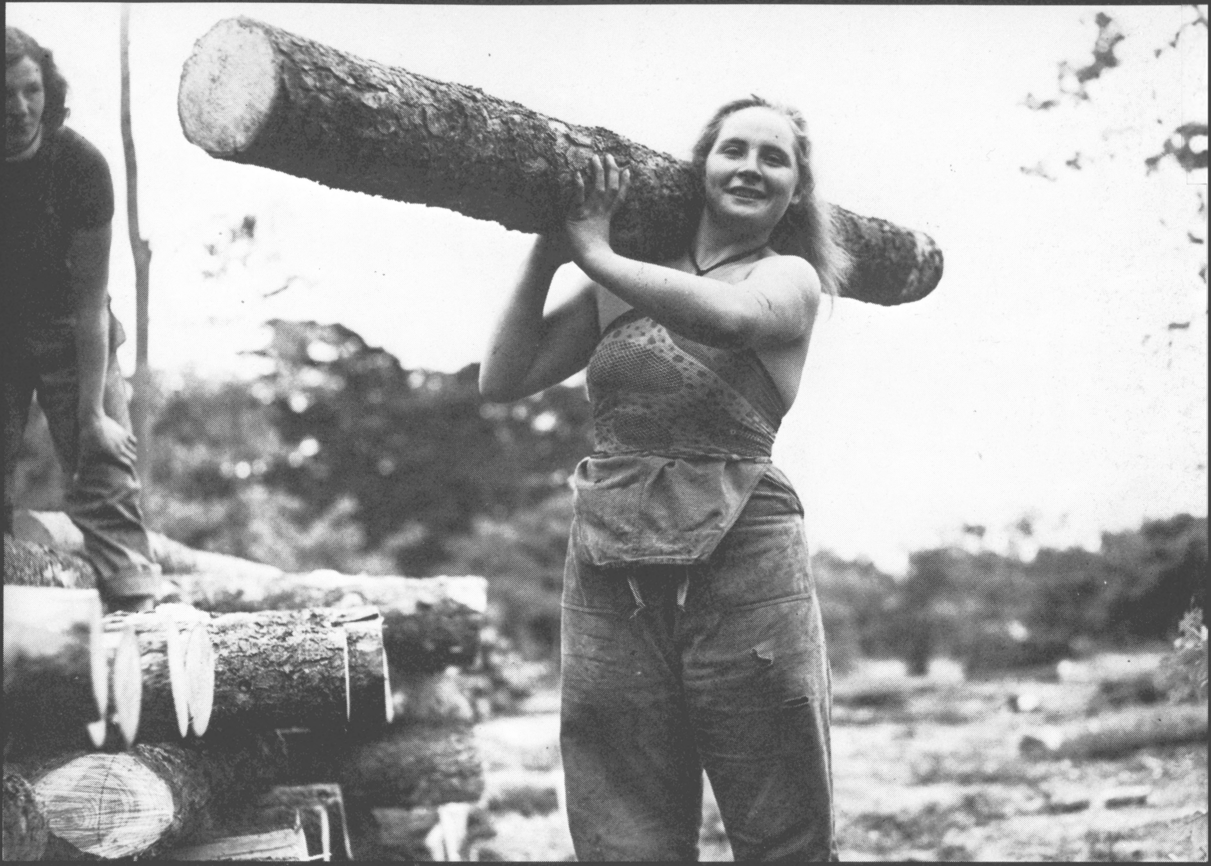
◀ **187**
A rack of babies at Richmond Hospital shelter.

▶ **188**
A woman driver of a double-decker bus in Oxford. The demands of war on manpower were at first masked by the large numbers of unemployed. There were still 1⅓ million unemployed in Britain in January 1940. But by spring 1942 all the available men had been absorbed. Women took a number of jobs as they had in the First World War.


2
HEADINGTON
CARFAX
TO SUMMERTOWN
D 172
JFC 796

CROSSING THE ROAD?
STOP!
LOOK RIGHT LOOK LEFT
UNITED DAIRIES
PASTEURISED MILK AND CREAM
28

◀ **189**
Milkwoman, 1940.

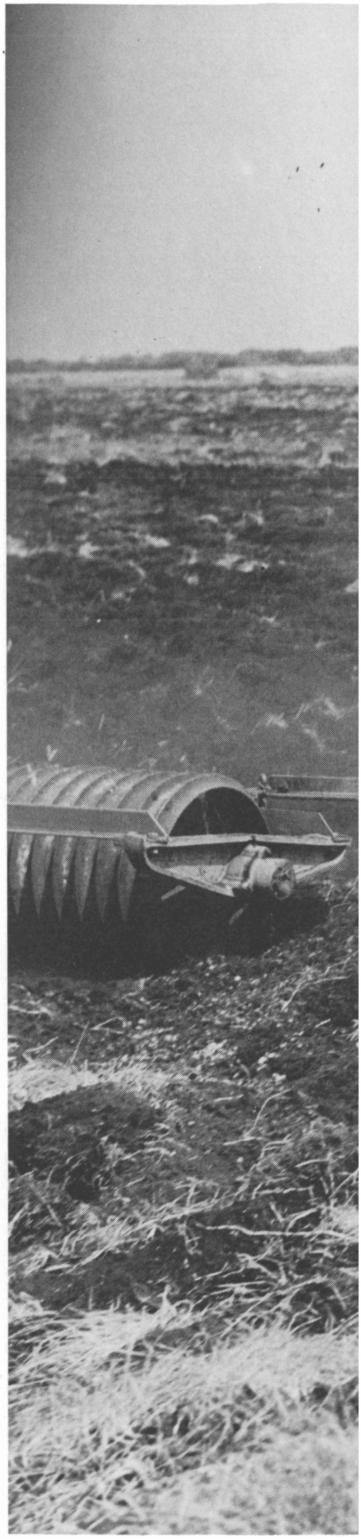


◀ **190**
Landgirls, winter 1940.

▲ **191**
A girl forestry worker in Suffolk.

▲ **192**
Manpower was not the only shortage. Bones were salvaged to make glue for aircraft; aluminium kettles and saucepans were collected to make Spitfires.

► **193**
To make the food go round, eating habits had to change. It was reluctantly accepted that crops for direct human consumption had ten times the food value of meat reared on the same tonnage of cereals. Accordingly almost four million acres were ploughed up between 1939 and 1941; this worker was clearing Feltwell Fen in Norfolk.



INTERNATIONAL
TD 6
TracTracTor

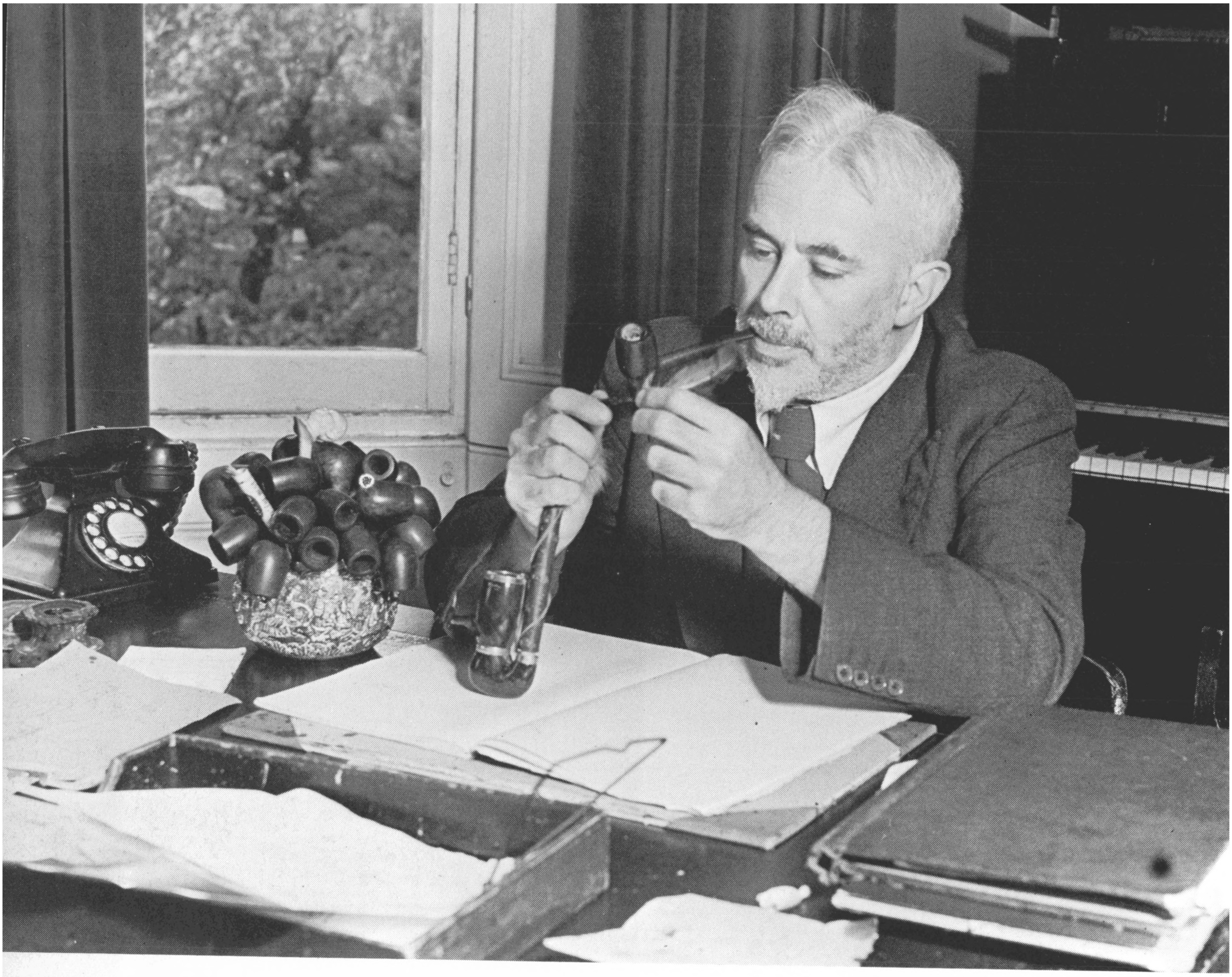
◀ **194**
The omnivorous pig, fed on swill made from waste, was a comparatively efficient meat producer and pig clubs became a craze, even in cities. King George VI posed for a propaganda photograph.

▲ **195**
Queen Mary, at her wartime home at Badminton, set a good example in land clearance for cultivation. She was seventy-five when this photograph was taken in 1942.

RELAXATION

◀ **196**
Lady Violet Bonham-Carter in 1944. Difficulties with petrol and the blackout meant that people tended to spend their evenings at home. There was no television in wartime but the radio was turned on for the six o'clock news in most homes.

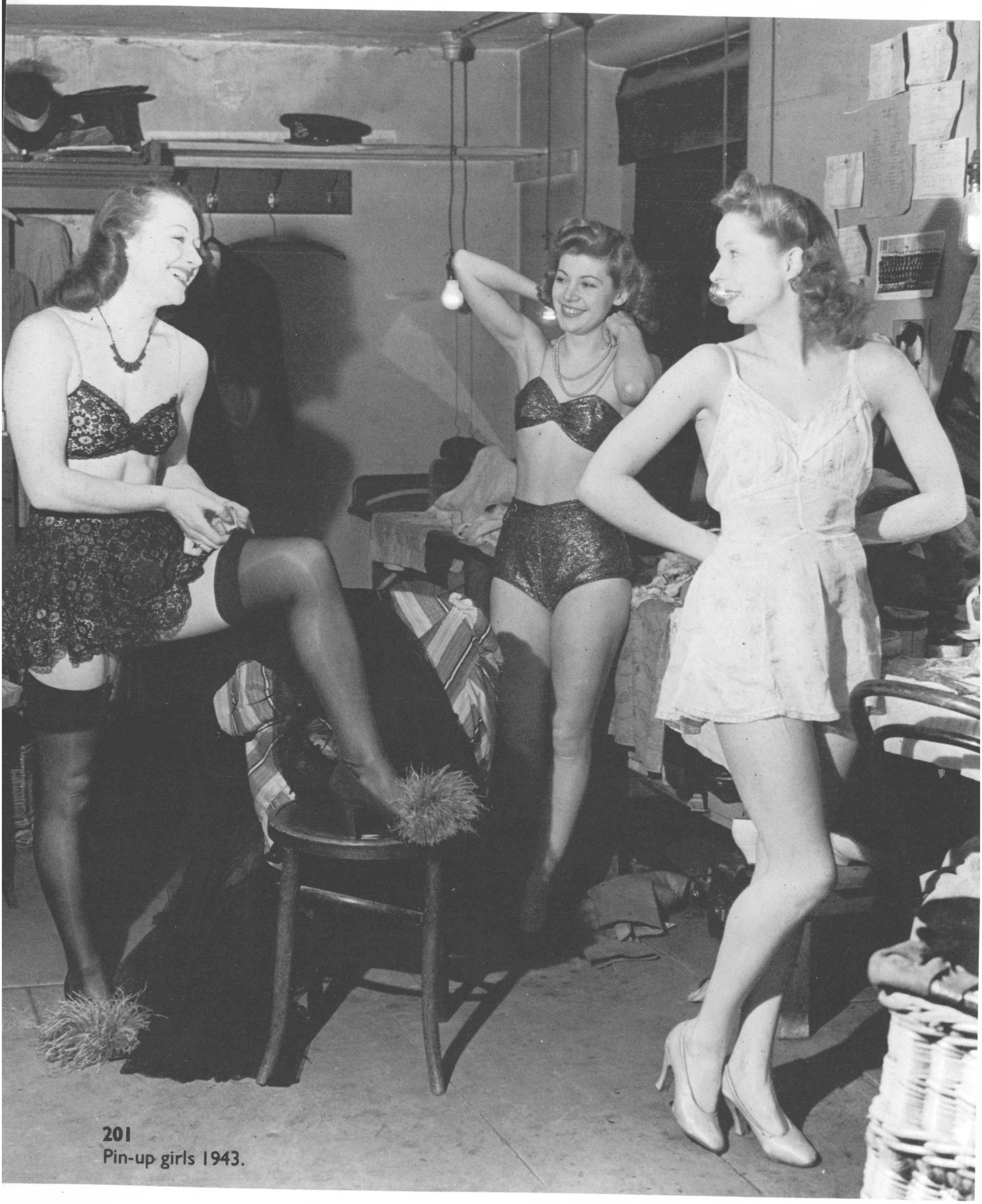
▲ **197**
Radio also provided entertainment, notably Tommy Handley's *ITMA* (It's That Man Again) which probably did more for morale than the government propaganda.



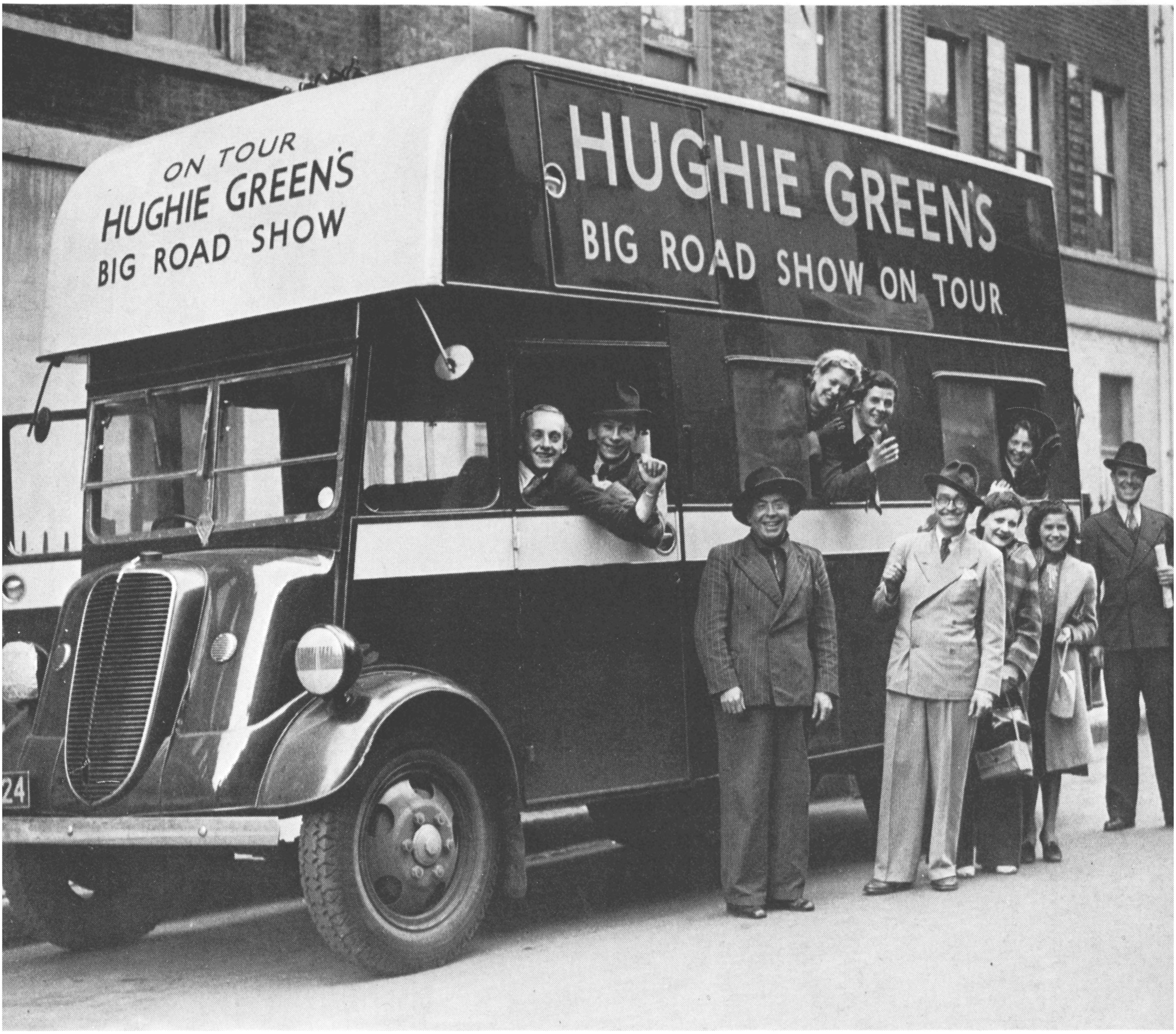
198
The Brains Trust first broadcast in 1941 and continued throughout the war. A panel of three men, the philosopher Professor C.E.M. Joad (shown here), the scientist Julian Huxley and Commander Campbell, answered questions sent in by listeners.

▲ **199**
Harry Lauder at home.

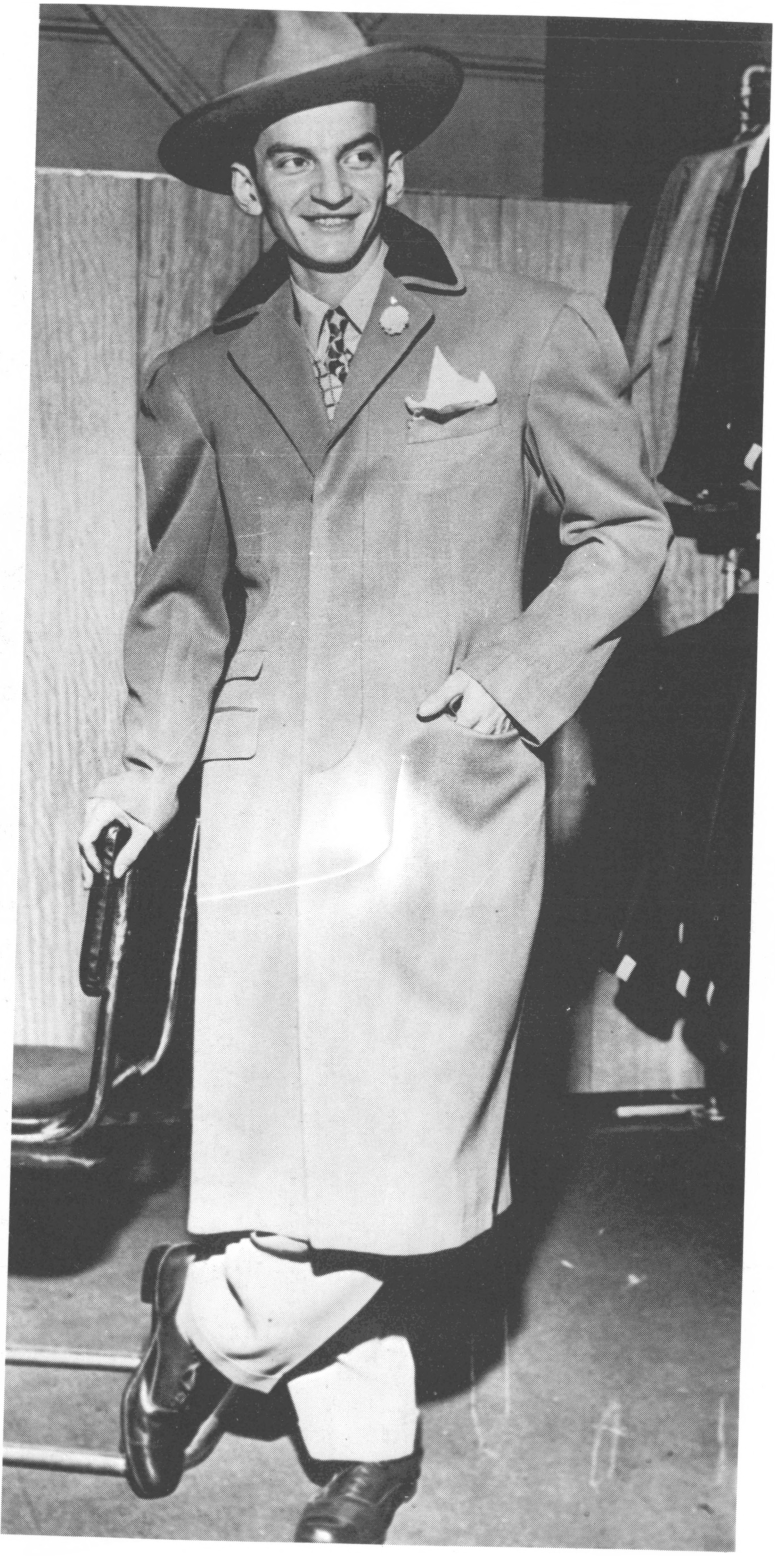
► **200**
Deborah Kerr.



201
Pin-up girls 1943.


ON TOUR
HUGHIE GREEN'S
BIG ROAD SHOW
HUGHIE GREEN'S
BIG ROAD SHOW ON TOUR

202
Many entertainers took to the road to bring cheer to troops stationed all over Britain. Here Hughie Green is shown with his bus which he drove himself.

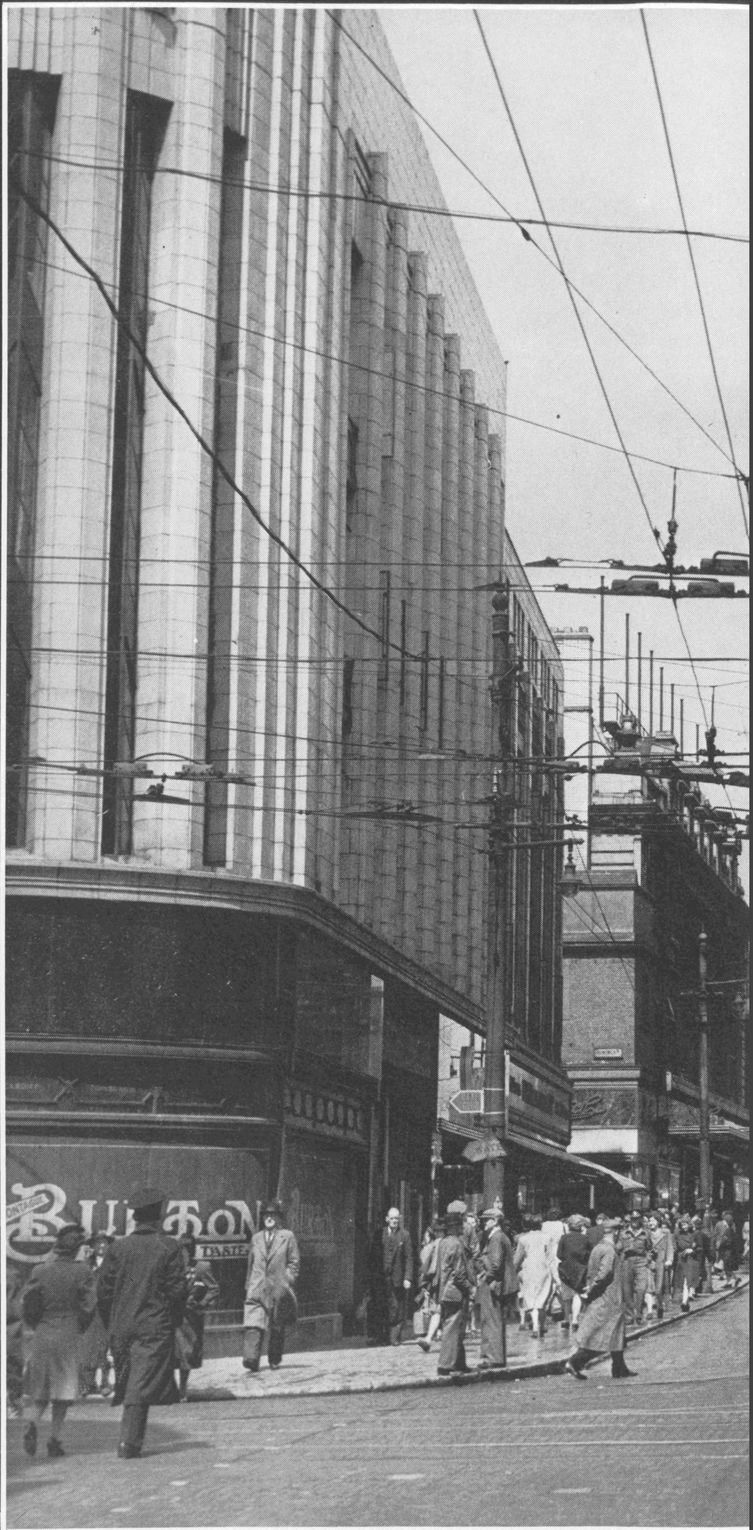


◀ **203**
A 1943 hit song by the Andrews Sisters was 'The Zoot Suit' after a craze for these bizarre garments swept America.

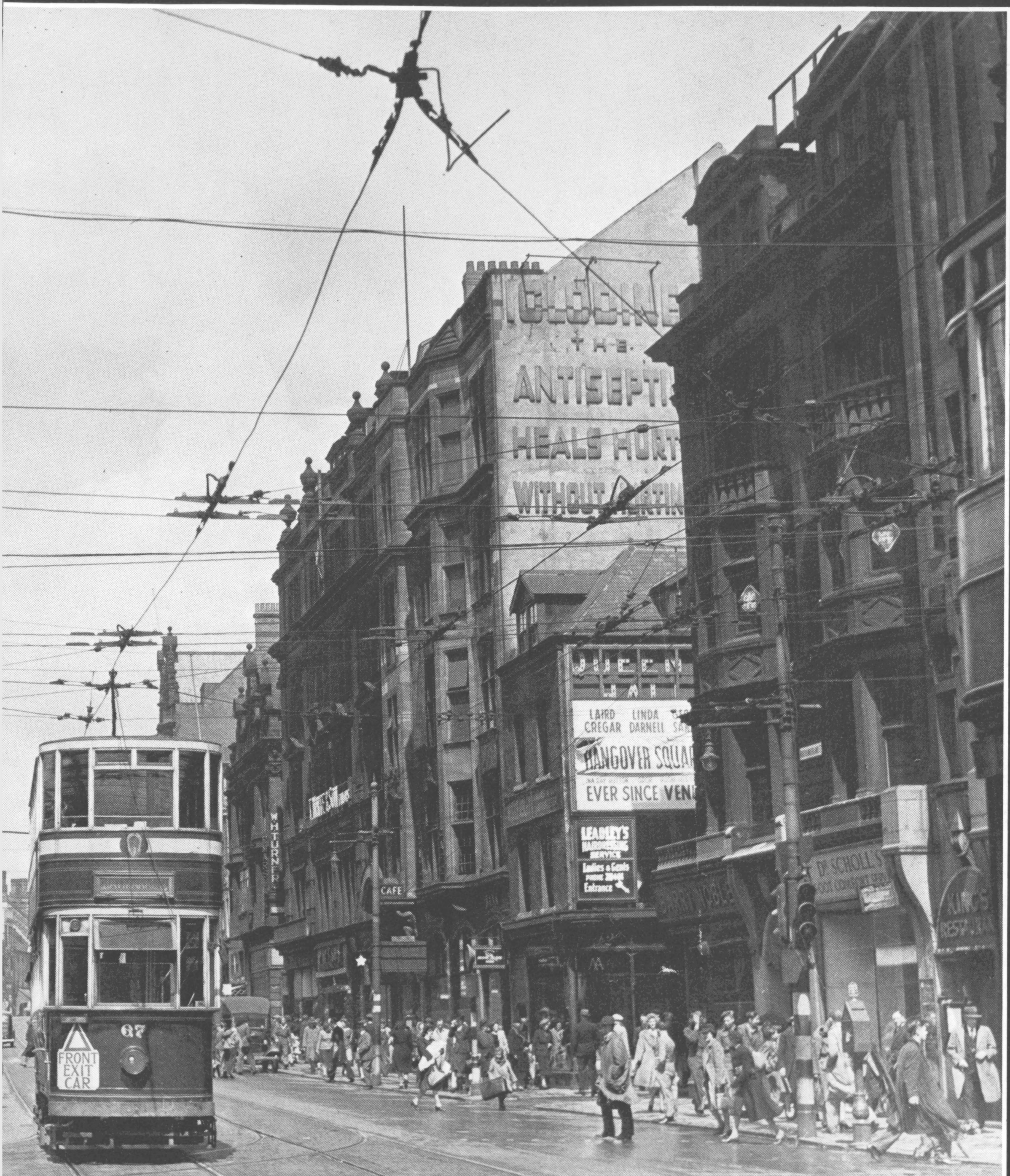
▶ **204**
Covent Garden Opera House was turned into a dance hall.

▶ **205**
There was a marked increase in the demand for books. Longmans published *The Shelter Book* in 1940, an anthology to keep shelterers company in 'the life of huddle and hard bunks . . . improvised sanitation, vacuum flasks, torches, community singing'.

SHARPLESHALL STREET N.W.1
SAINT PANCRAS WAR TIME TRAVELLING LIBRARY
SAINT PANCRAS WAR TIME TRAVELLING LIBRARY
EM
ADY 66



206
Few motor cars, many pedestrians in Newcastle upon Tyne, 1945.

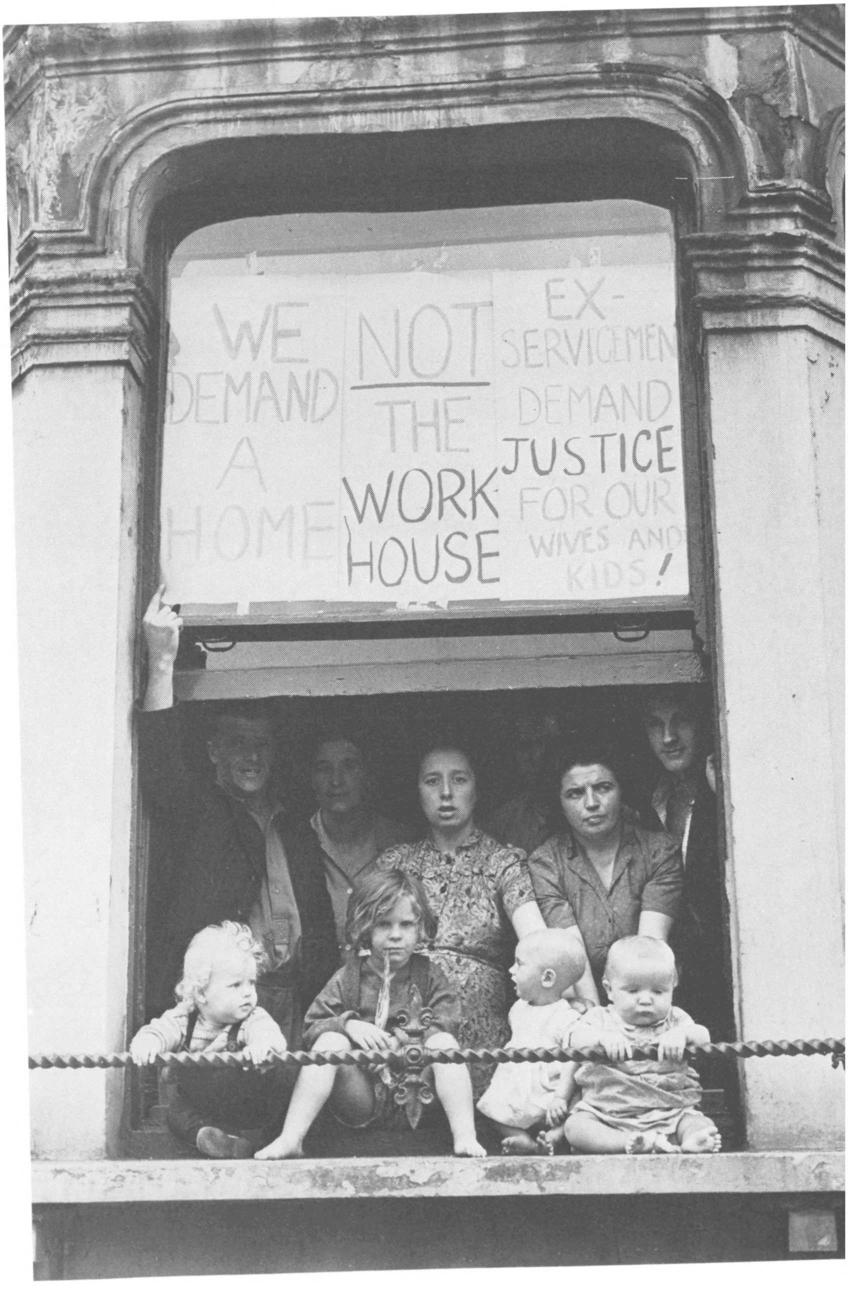

IODINE
THE
ANTISEPTIC
HEALS HURT
WITHOUT HURTING
LAIRD CREGAR
LINDA DARNELL
HANGOVER SQUARE
EVER SINCE VENUS
LEADLEY'S HAIRDRESSING SERVICES
Ladies & Gents Entrance
W.H. TURNER
CAFE
DR SCHOLL'S FOOT COMFORT SERVICE
KING'S RESTAURANT
FRONT EXIT CAR
67

THE YEARS BETWEEN
Boots
CRITERION THEATRE
BRASSERIE UNIVERSELLE
DUDD & CO
HAT MAKERS
FAMILY

207
1945 brought victory at last – but American aid was cut off on 17 August and lend-lease, at Truman's direction, ended on VJ day. The outlook for Britain was bleak.

The Post-War Years

A ROOF OVER ONE'S HEAD


WE DEMAND A HOME
NOT THE WORK HOUSE
EX-SERVICEMEN DEMAND JUSTICE FOR OUR WIVES AND KIDS!

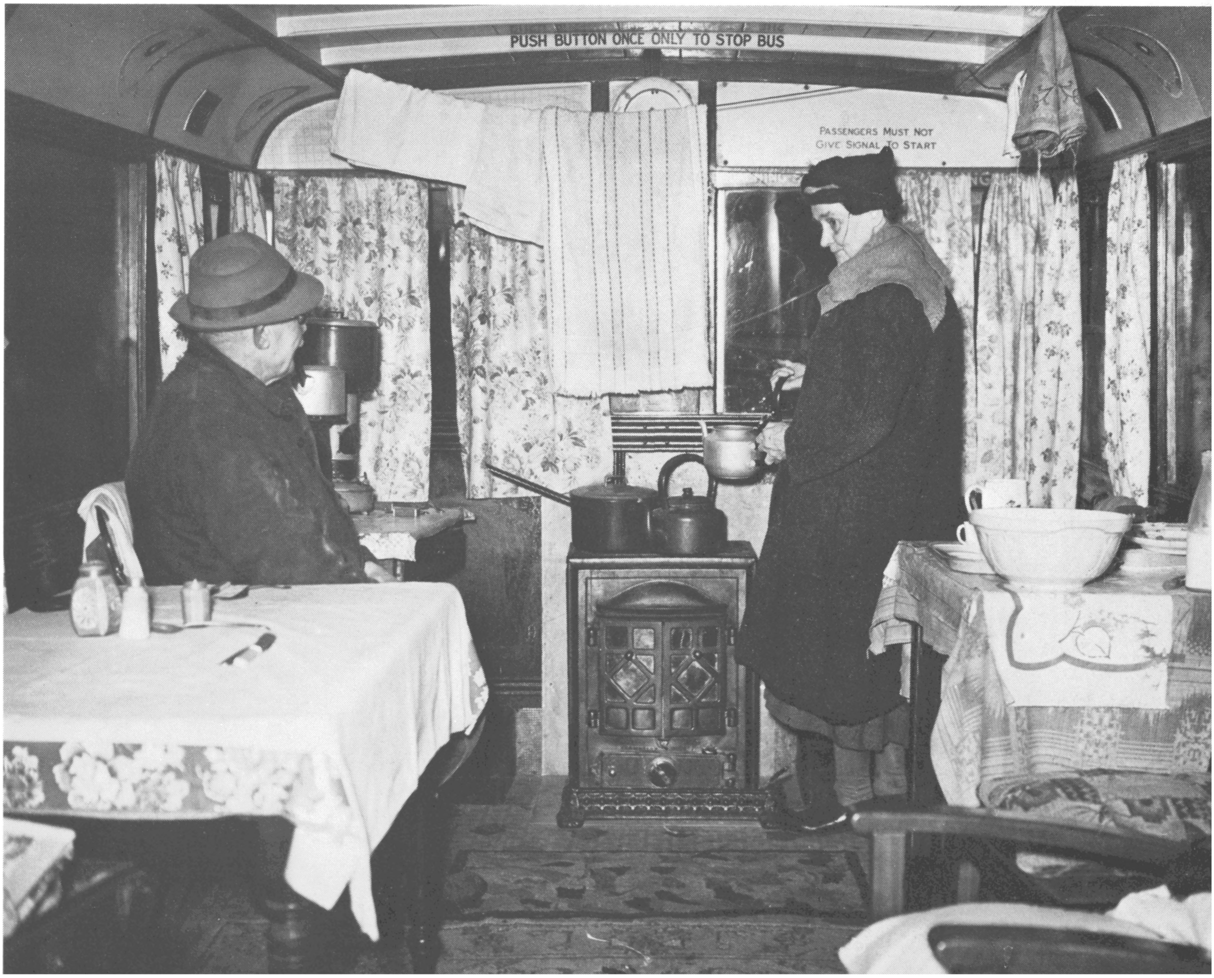
208
The war made thousands homeless. As the men were demobilized and came back, bitterness grew. Squatters, supported by a vigorous campaign by the Communist party, moved into empty properties all over London in large numbers. As fast as they were evicted, they settled elsewhere.

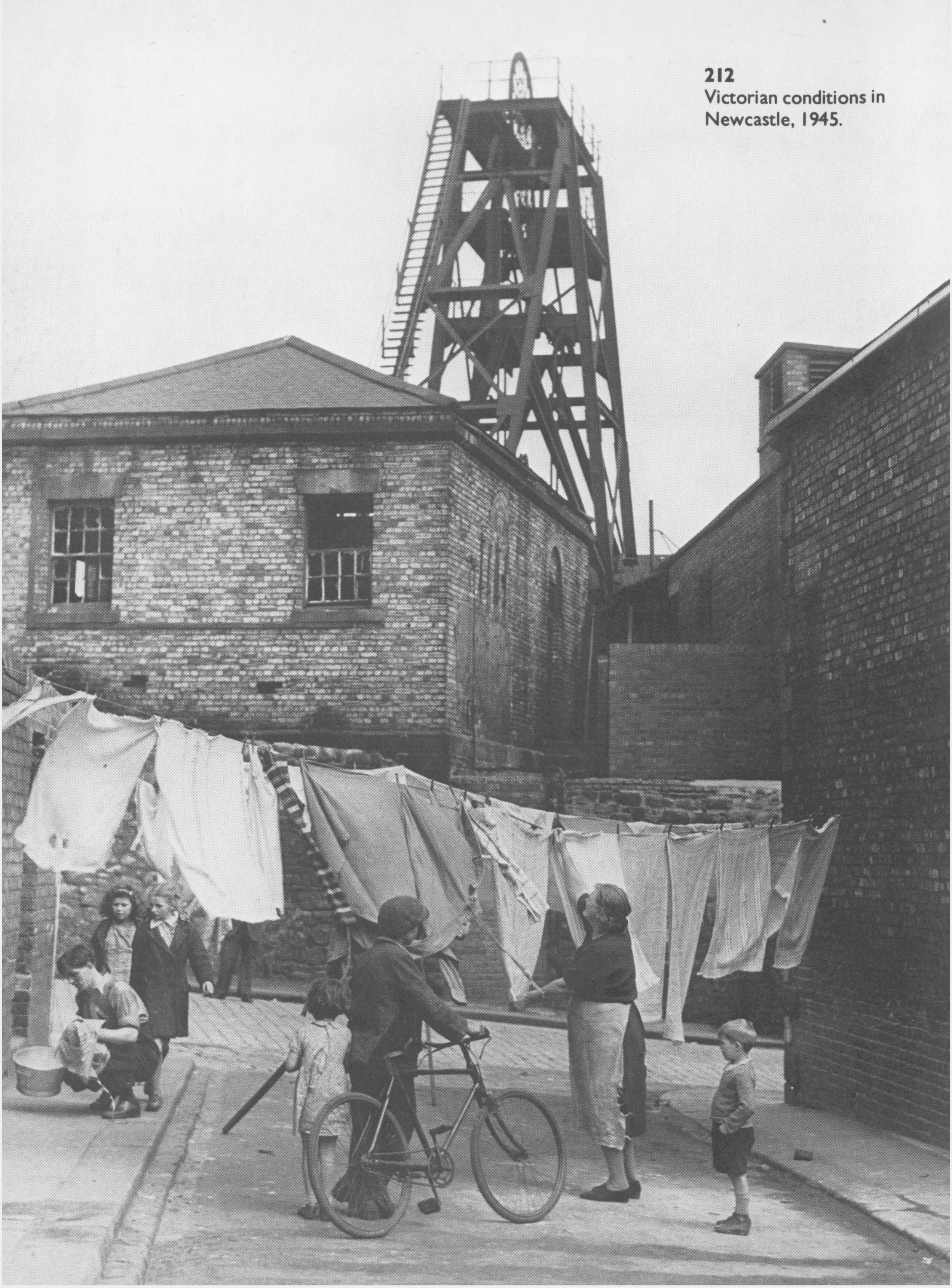
209
The empty military camps and gun sites were tempting homes for squatters. Twenty thousand people moved into derelict camps in 1946. Eventually the Government accepted their presence and six thousand families were allowed to stay. No less than 563 camps, full of squatters, were handed over to the local authorities.

UPIED HOPSON'S CHOICE.

▶ 210
Self-help in Birmingham. In 1949 fifty families joined forces to build their own bungalows. While the men worked on bricklaying, wives made tea and cooked in the site hut.

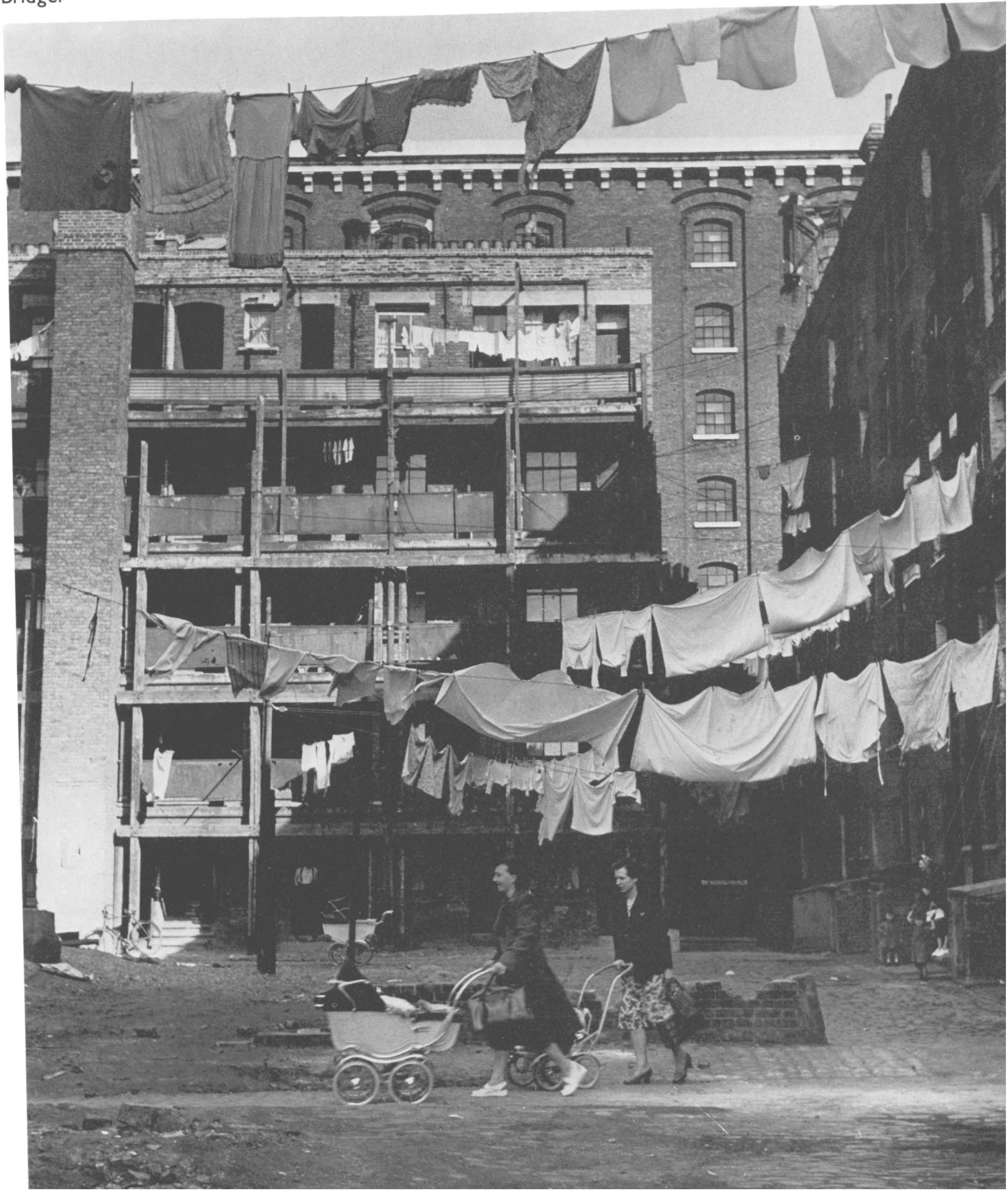
▼ 211
A septuagenarian Suffolk couple housed themselves in a converted trolley bus, parked in a field. They foiled the Council's attempts to move them by thatching the roof of their bus, thus changing it from a 'mobile home' into a 'permanent dwelling'.


PUSH BUTTON ONCE ONLY TO STOP BUS
PASSENGERS MUST NOT GIVE SIGNAL TO START



212
Victorian conditions in Newcastle, 1945.

213
Wapping 1950, in London's East End. These flats had been built in the 1890s for workers building Tower Bridge.



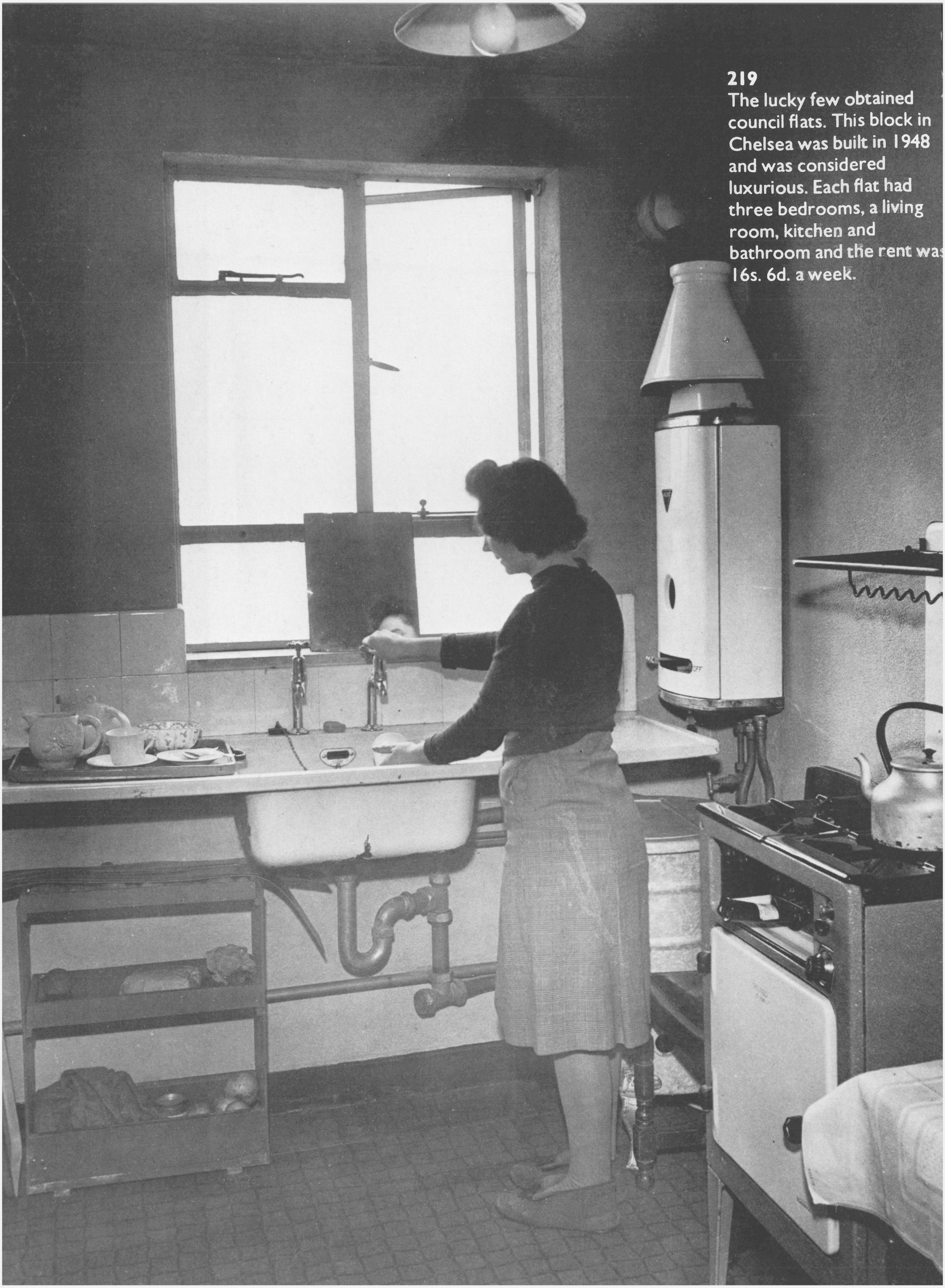
◀ **214**
More than 60,000 houses were built in 1945 and 1946. Two-thirds of these were 'prefabs'.

◀ **215**
There were Prefab Garden Competitions. Here is the winner of the 1948 Queen Mary Cup, Police Sergeant Botwright of Camberwell.

◀ **216**
This family were able to beat food shortages by producing vegetables, chickens and rabbits in their prefab garden.

◀ **217**
With its two bedrooms, the prefab was rather cramped for this family with three children.

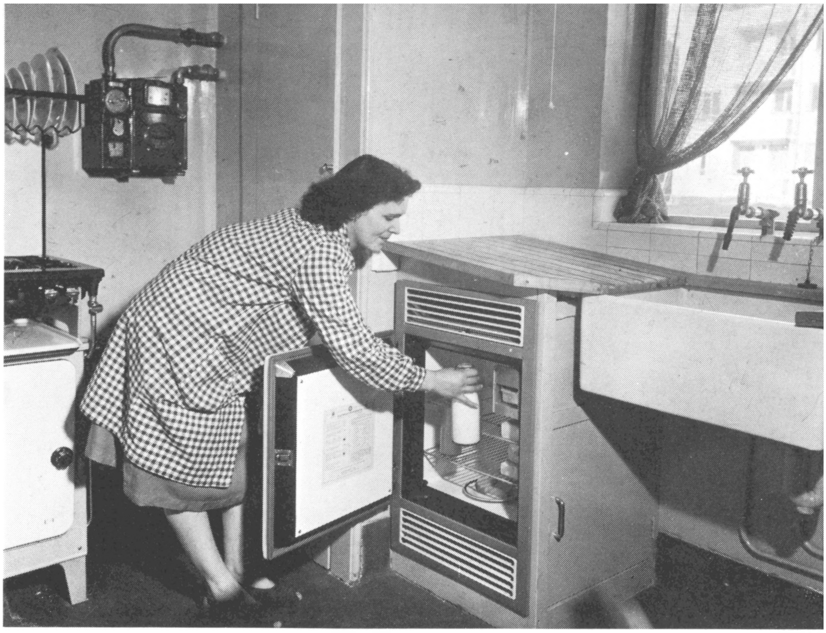
▼ **218**
The living room, however, was made comfortable with furniture salvaged from the family's previous home, which had been bombed.

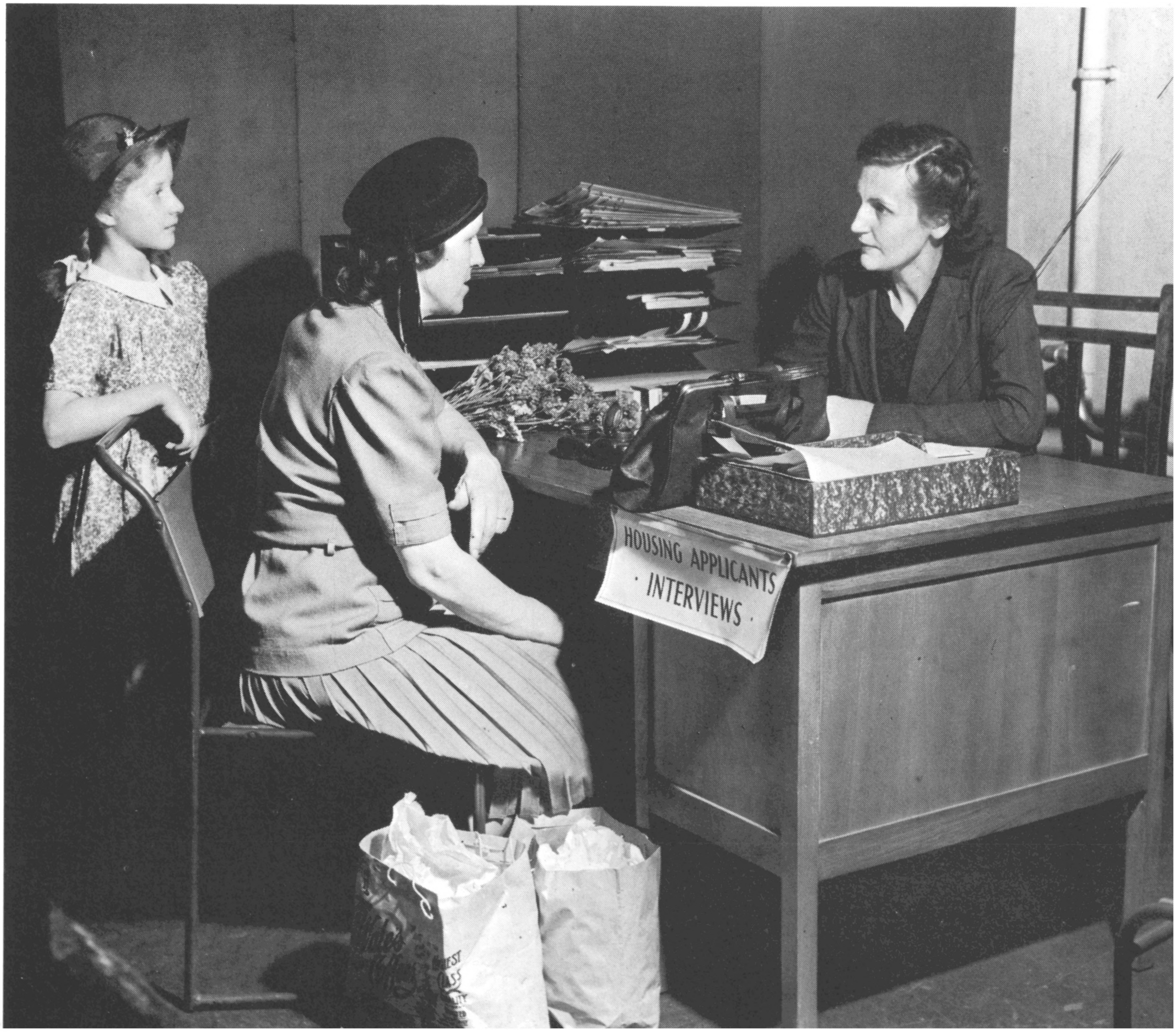


219
The lucky few obtained council flats. This block in Chelsea was built in 1948 and was considered luxurious. Each flat had three bedrooms, a living room, kitchen and bathroom and the rent was 16s. 6d. a week.

▶ **220**
These flats in Paddington were also completed in 1948. They boasted 'all the latest household amenities', such as hot and cold running water in each flat, central heating, refrigerators, and power points throughout.

▼ **221**
1946: a Housing Office in Holborn.

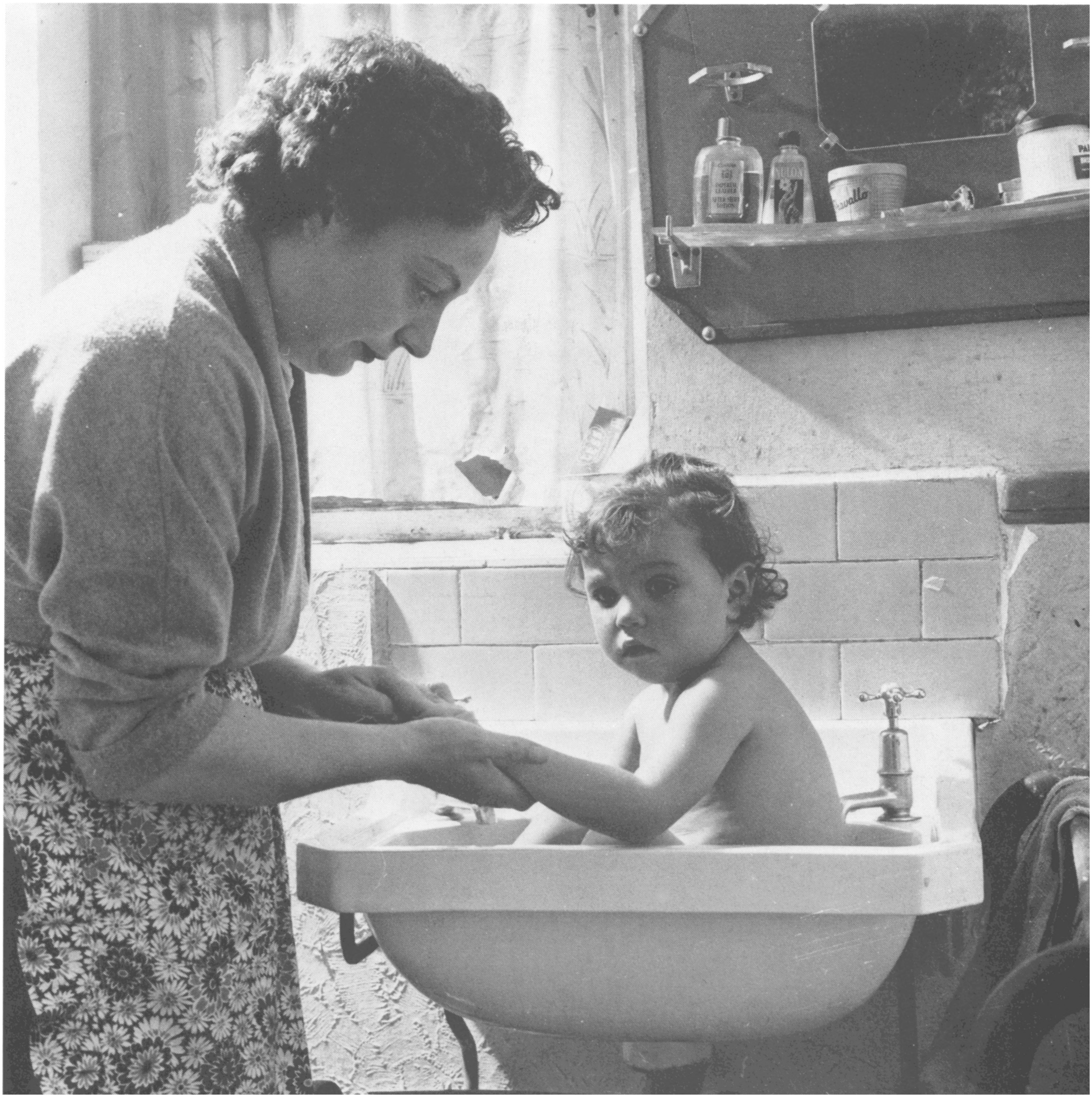


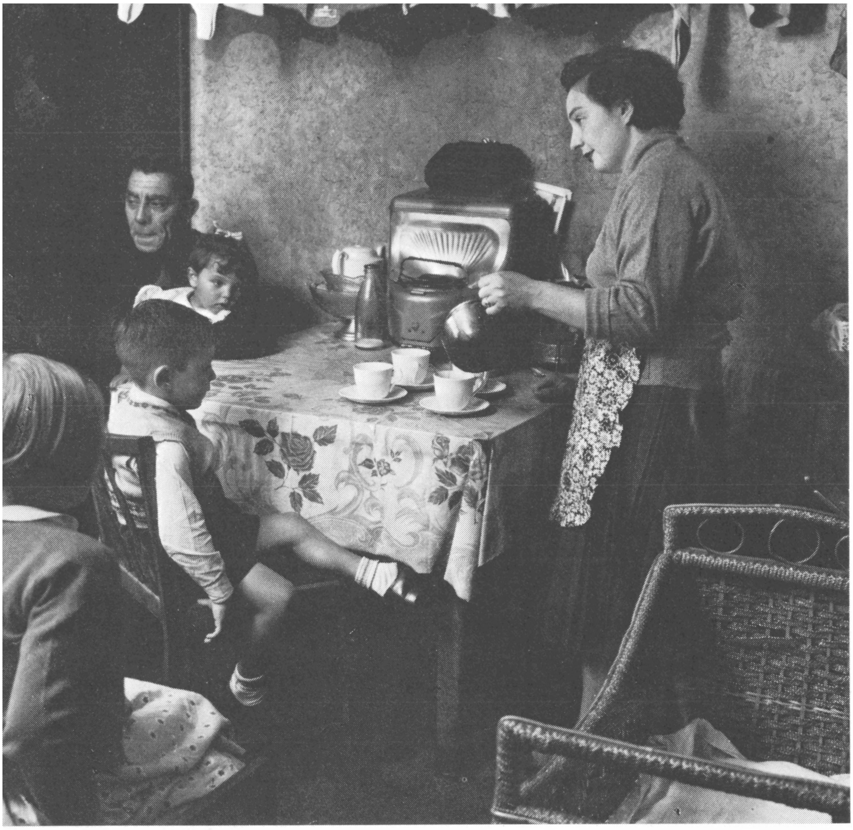


HOUSING APPLICANTS
· INTERVIEWS ·

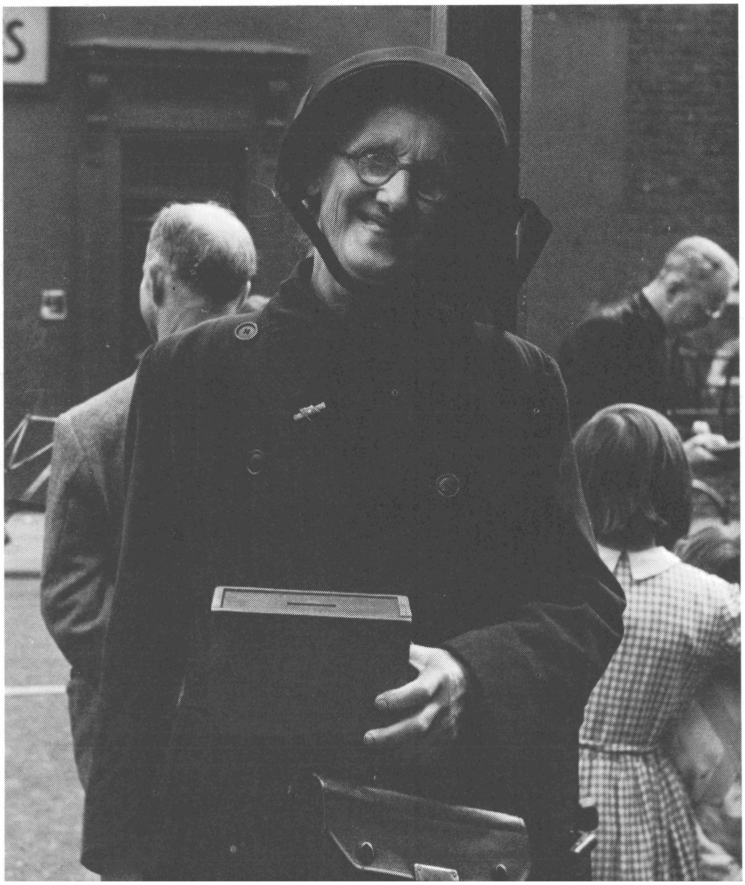
◀ **222**
A housing lottery in Erith, Kent; 1,300 hopefuls drew for the 120 houses available.

▼ **223**
Much of the housing remained woefully inadequate. In the mid-1950s there was no bathroom for this family and the washstand was shared with three other families. There was no running hot water.





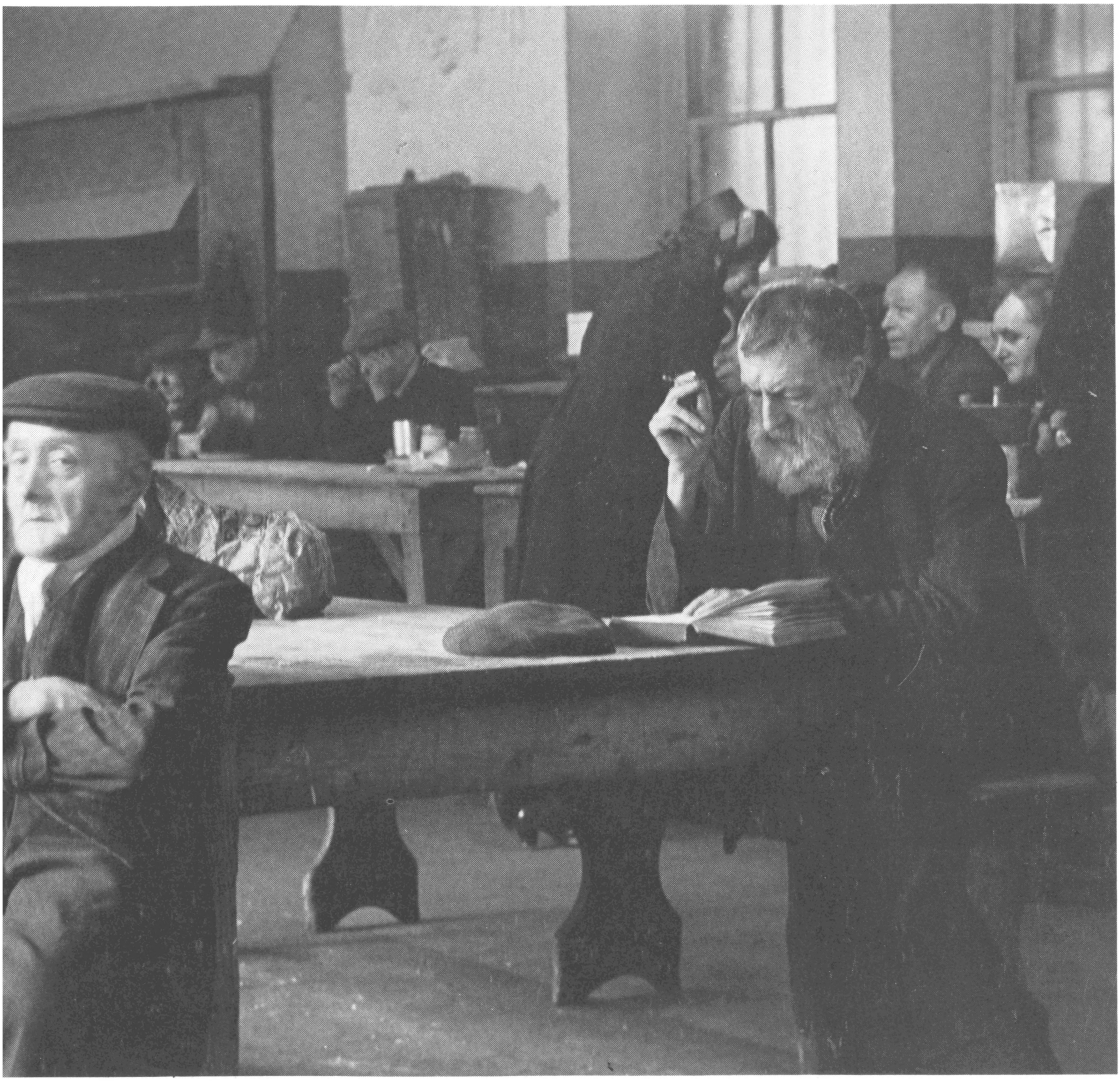
◀ **224**
The same family at tea-time. To save space in their all-purpose room, there were only four chairs for a family of six.

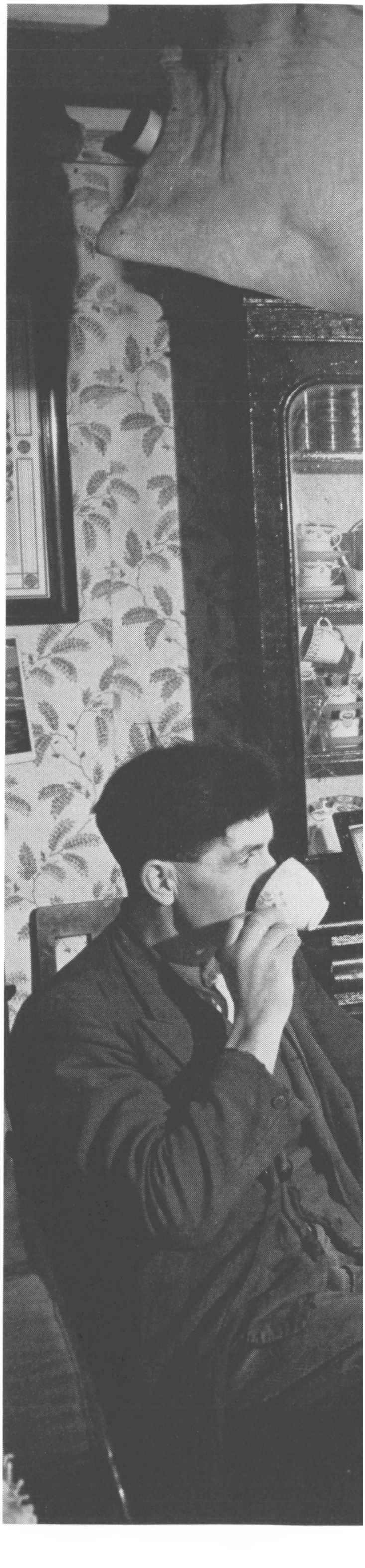


◀ **225**
The Salvation Army raised money to help the destitute.

▼ **226**

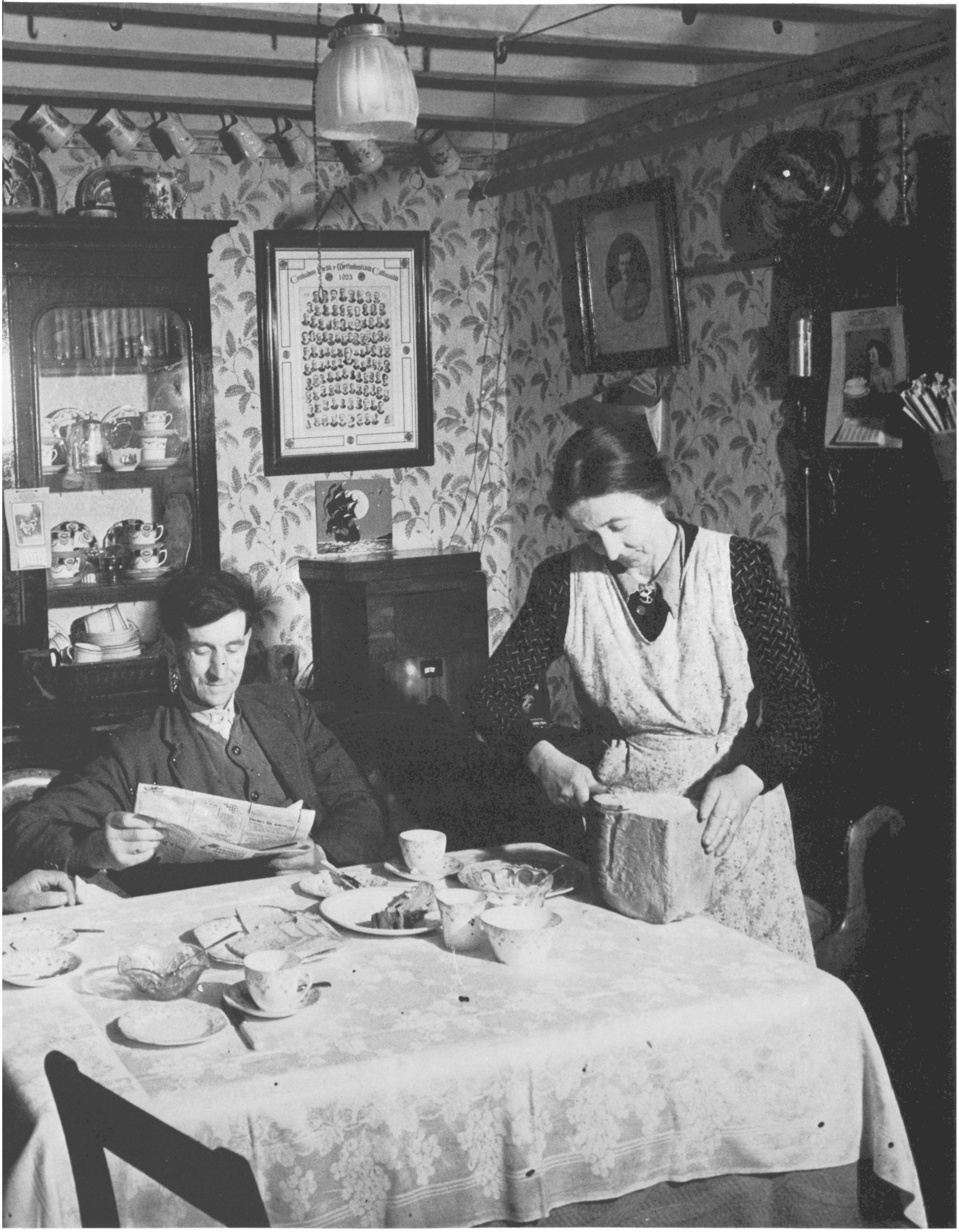
Salvation Army Cadets at a men's lodging place at Manor House, Camberwell. In 1949 the Army provided a bed for 10,000 men every night of the year. Their slogan for 1950 was 'Go for souls and go for the worst!'





▲ **227**
In the country, gipsy families kept to their old ways. Painted horse-drawn caravans could still be seen by the side of the road, with hobbled, skewbald horses grazing nearby. For a livelihood, gipsies relied on seasonal work on the land.

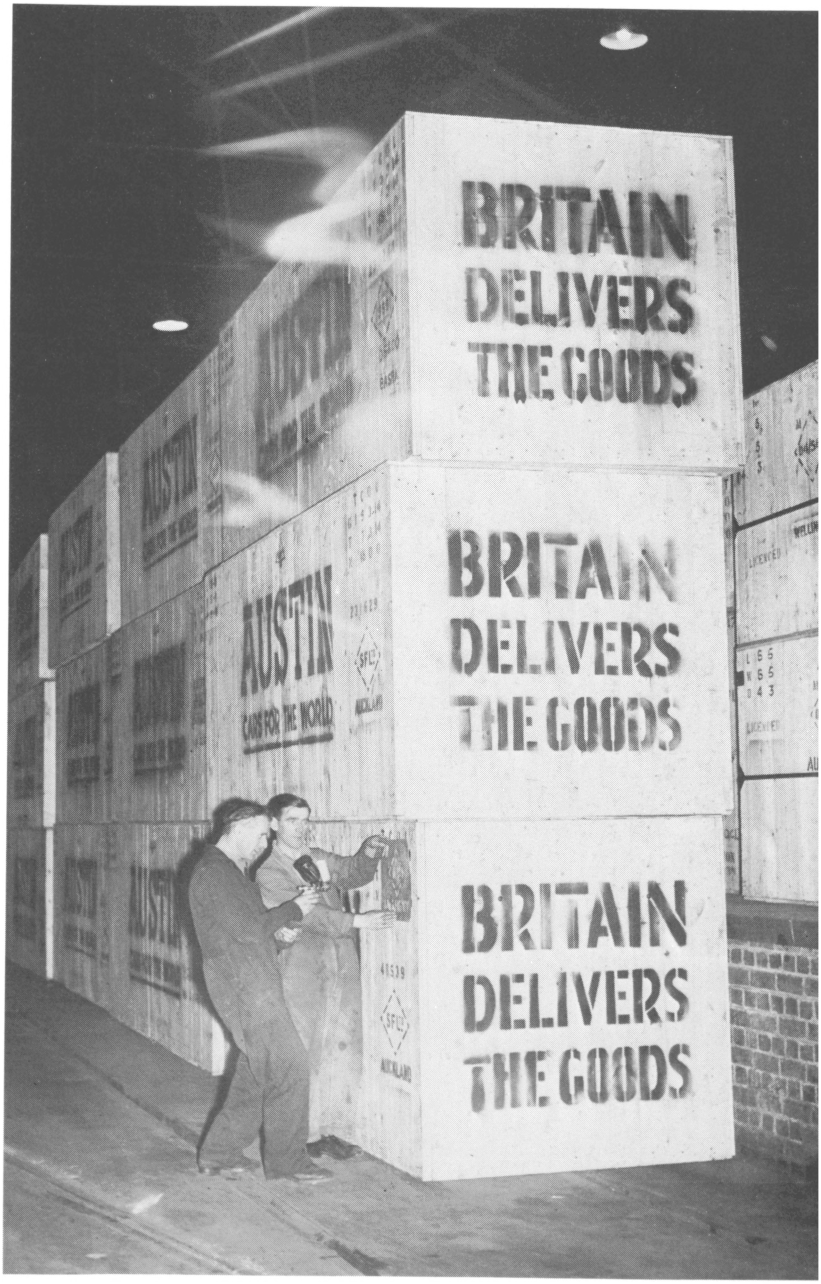
► **228**
A farmhouse tea in Wales, 1950. The house was lit with 'bottled gas' and salt pork hung from the ceiling.


1923

229
The open fire, soon to be banished by affluence and Clean Air regulations, was still the main source of heat for British houses in the forties. Central heating was rarely to be found, and the British, accustomed to hard winters and draughty homes, often found centrally-heated buildings oppressive and unhealthy.

GETTING BACK TO WORK

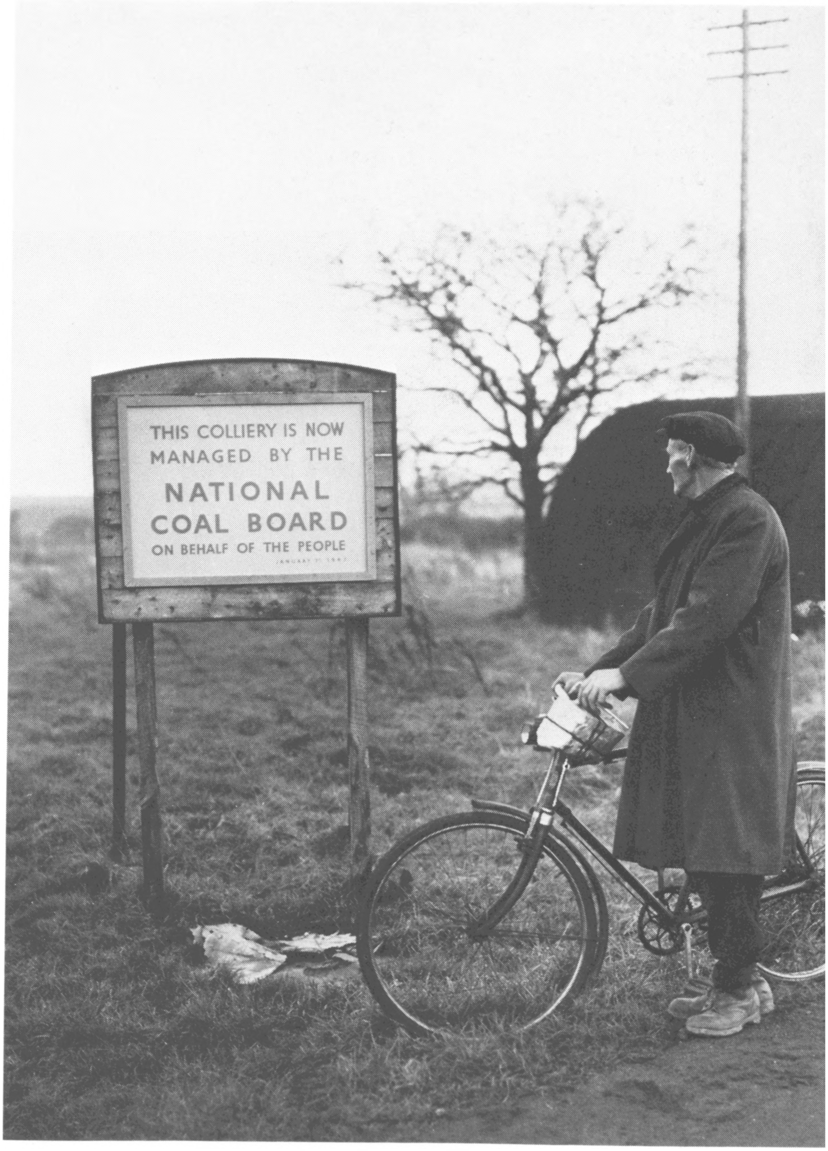
In 1945 British exports were less than half of the pre-war figure and government expenditure abroad was four times as great as before the war. The country was heavily in debt, industry was badly run down and vast sums were needed to reclothe, feed and house the people. The Labour government was planning the nationalization of key industries and the introduction of the Welfare State.

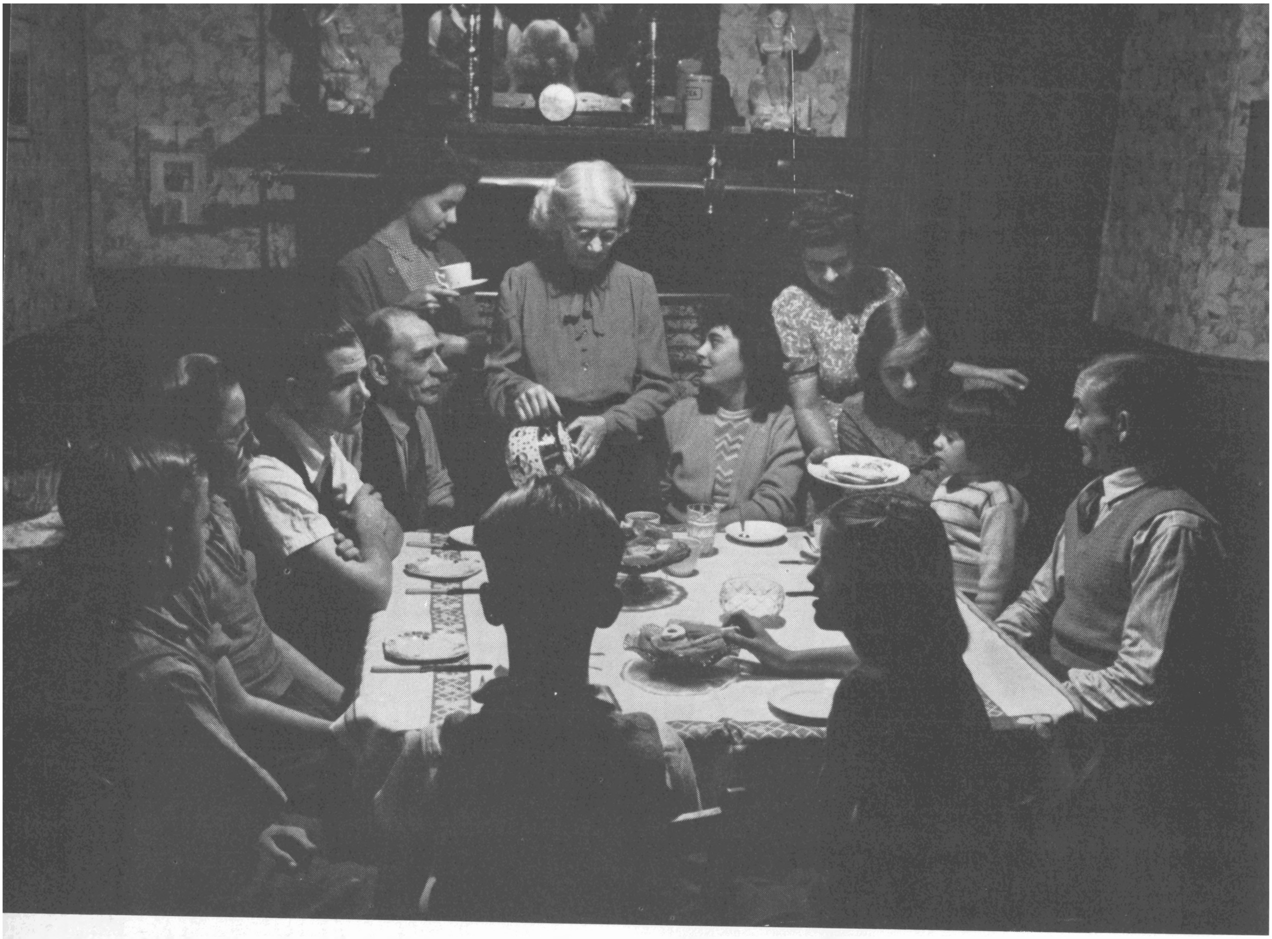

BRITAIN DELIVERS THE GOODS
BRITAIN DELIVERS THE GOODS
BRITAIN DELIVERS THE GOODS
AUSTIN
CARS FOR THE WORLD

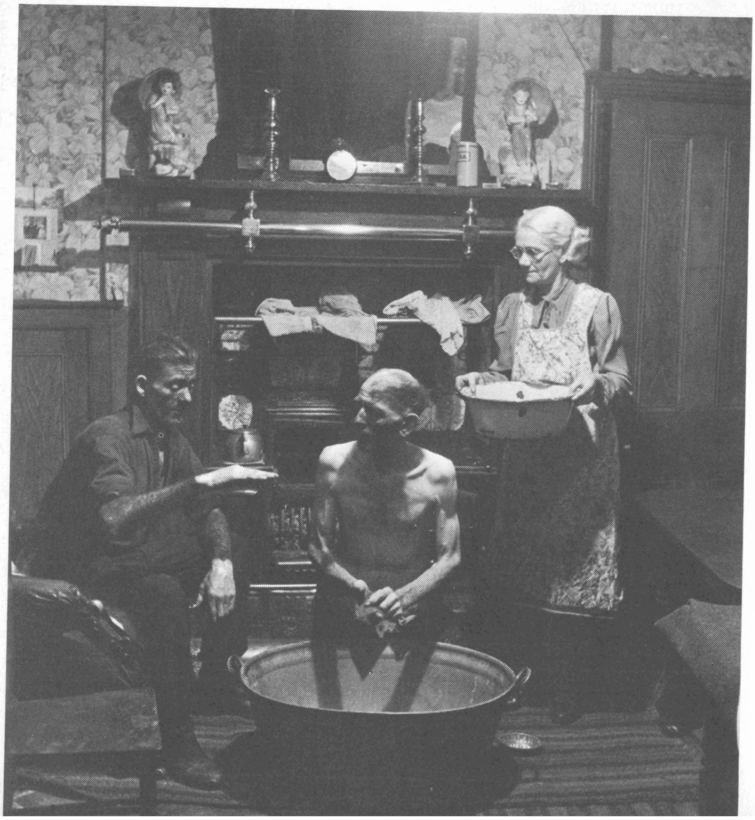
230
Exports were the chief priority. Austin cars went overseas while at home people nursed their old cars or did without.

◀ **231**
The production line at the Morris Cowley factory in Oxford, 1946. The target was 2,500 cars a week.

▼ **232**
The coal mines were nationalized on 1 January 1947, but the miners were disillusioned to find that conditions were slow to change.


THIS COLLIERY IS NOW
MANAGED BY THE
NATIONAL
COAL BOARD
ON BEHALF OF THE PEOPLE



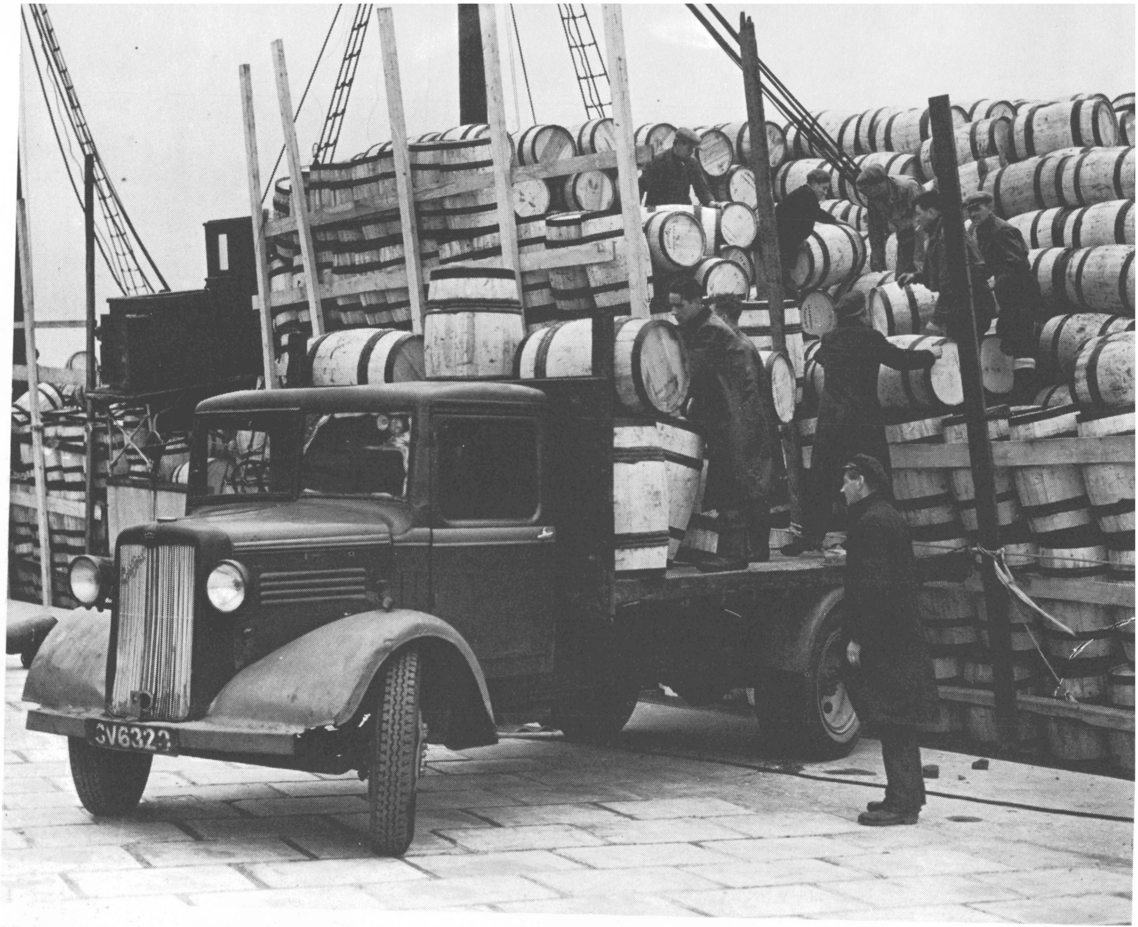


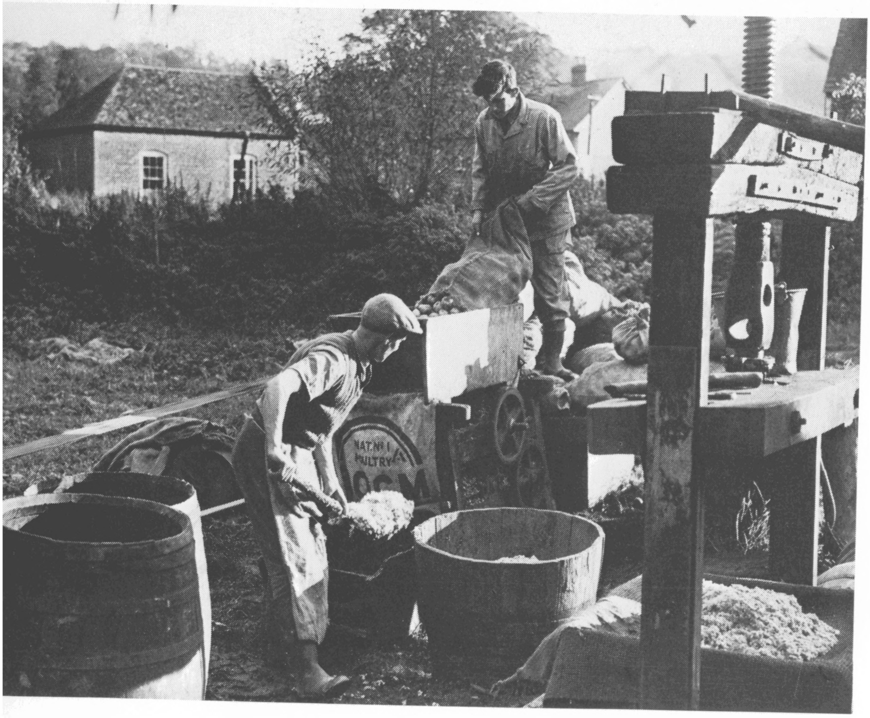
▲ **233**
A Welsh mining family in 1949. Three generations gathered for a meal every weekend.

◀ **234**
The same family in the same room on a working day.

▶ **235**
Steel at Corby, 1946. Steel was finally nationalized in 1950 in the face of bitter opposition from the Conservatives, aided by the House of Lords.

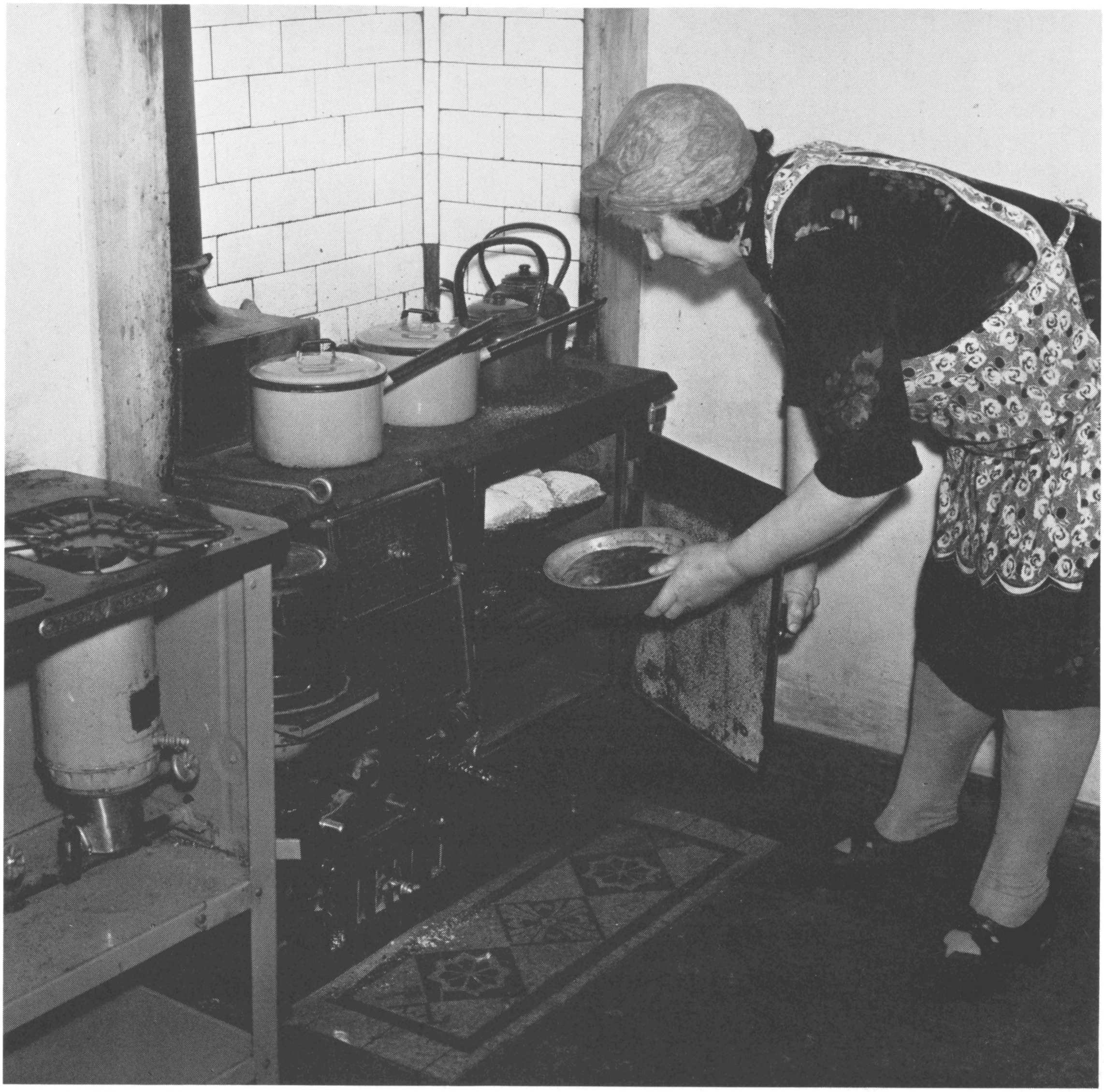
▶ **236**
Twenty-four seater helicopter at the Farnborough Show, 1949.



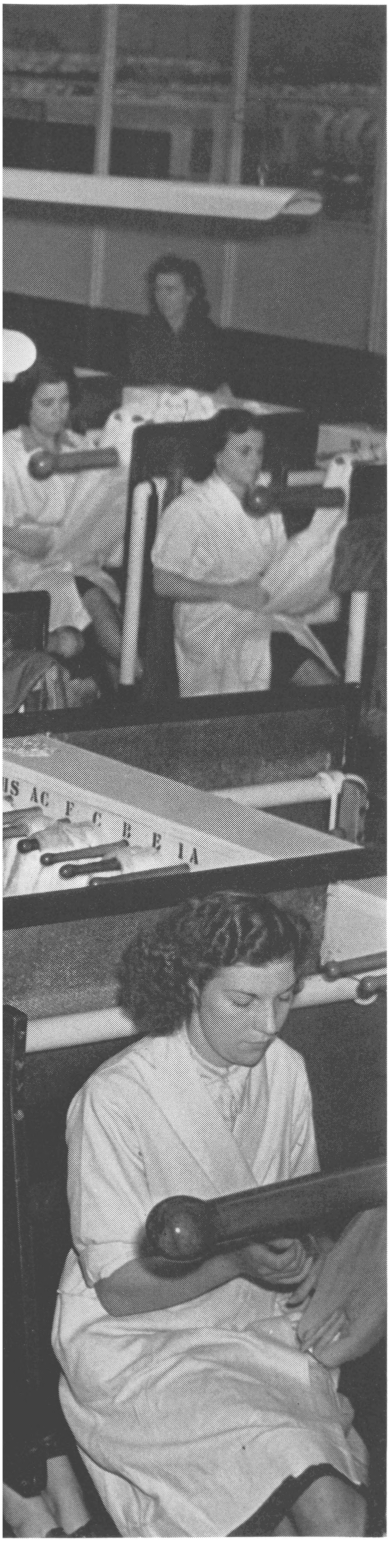


▲ **237**
Barrels for the Shetland catch of herring being unloaded at Lerwick in 1949. The Shetland fishermen were paid £3 per cran (about 1,500 fish) and fishing was unlimited for the first two weeks of the season. Fishermen from the mainland of Scotland were restricted in their catches, but received the higher price of 89s. 10d. (almost £4.50) for each cran.

◀ **238**
Cider-making in Gloucestershire. Farmers continued in their old way of life, but the war had brought them greatly increased prosperity.

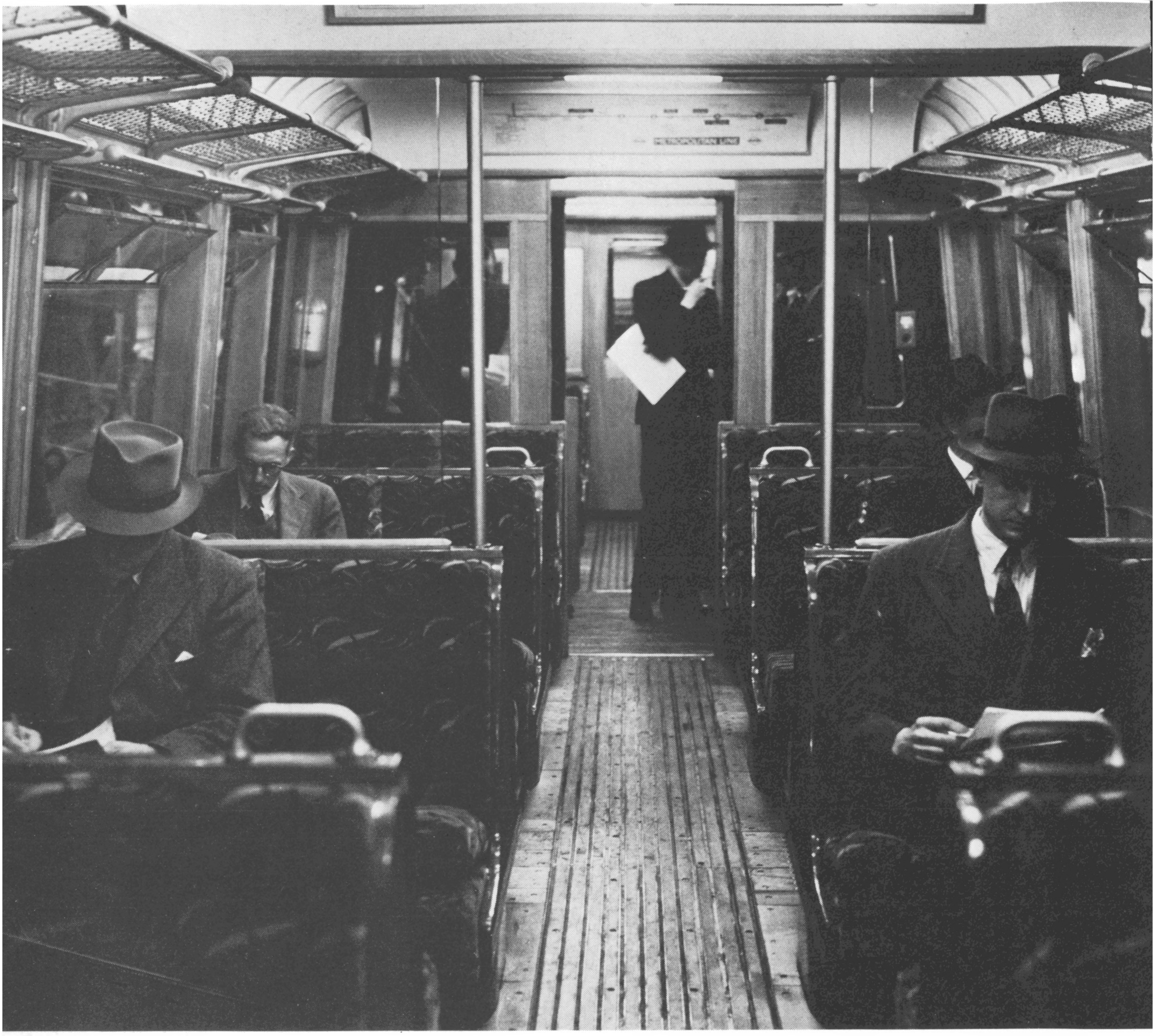


239
The wife of a farmer in the Orkneys in 1946.

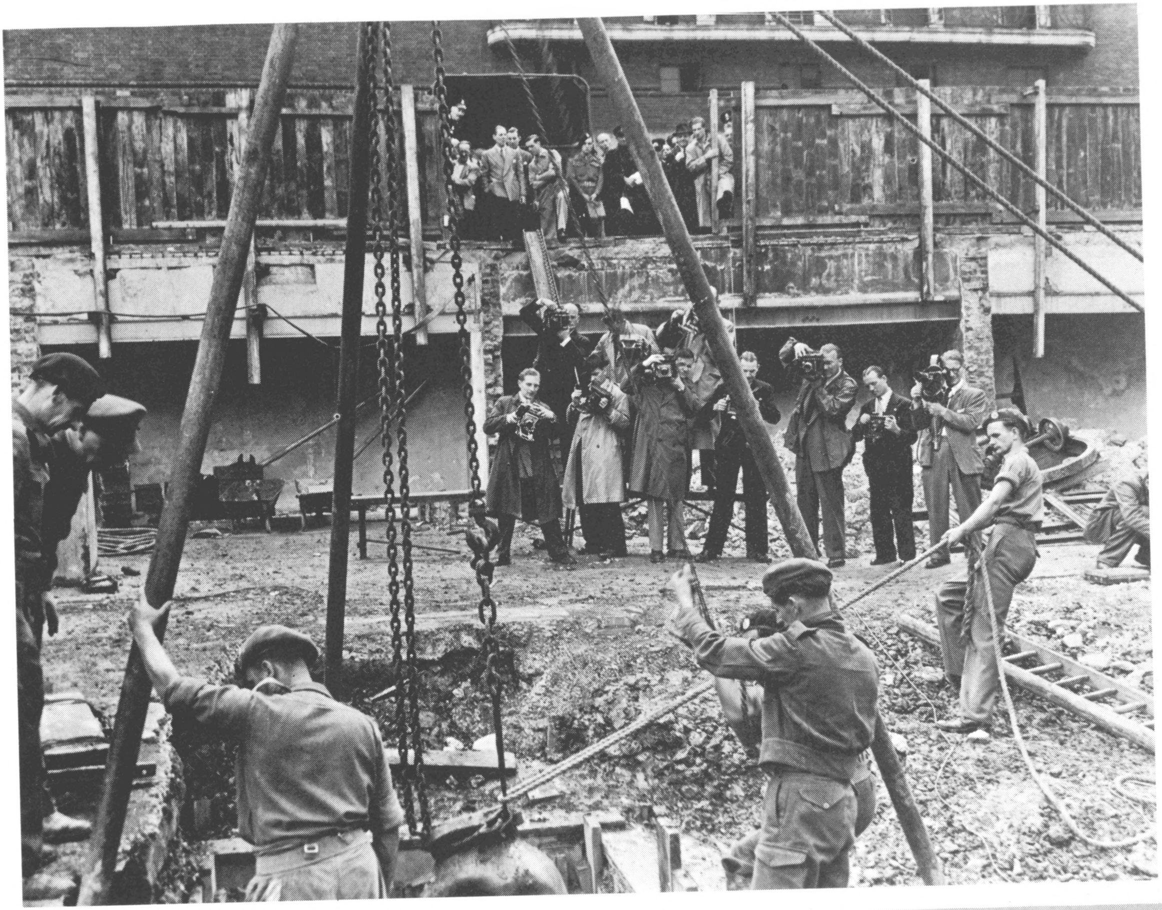

US AC F C B E IA

◀ **240**
As a result of the war, the textile industry had lost 300,000 workers. In this Doncaster factory in 1948 women were manufacturing rayon from cellulose extracted from cotton waste.

▲ **241**
One bright feature of the forties was that unemployment was almost non-existent, but there were the unlucky ones. This Dundee woman worked in a chocolate factory while her husband, unemployed since he had been demobilized two years before, kept house, cooked meals and minded the children. Her wage was £4.10s. a week; his weekly benefit was £1.13s.

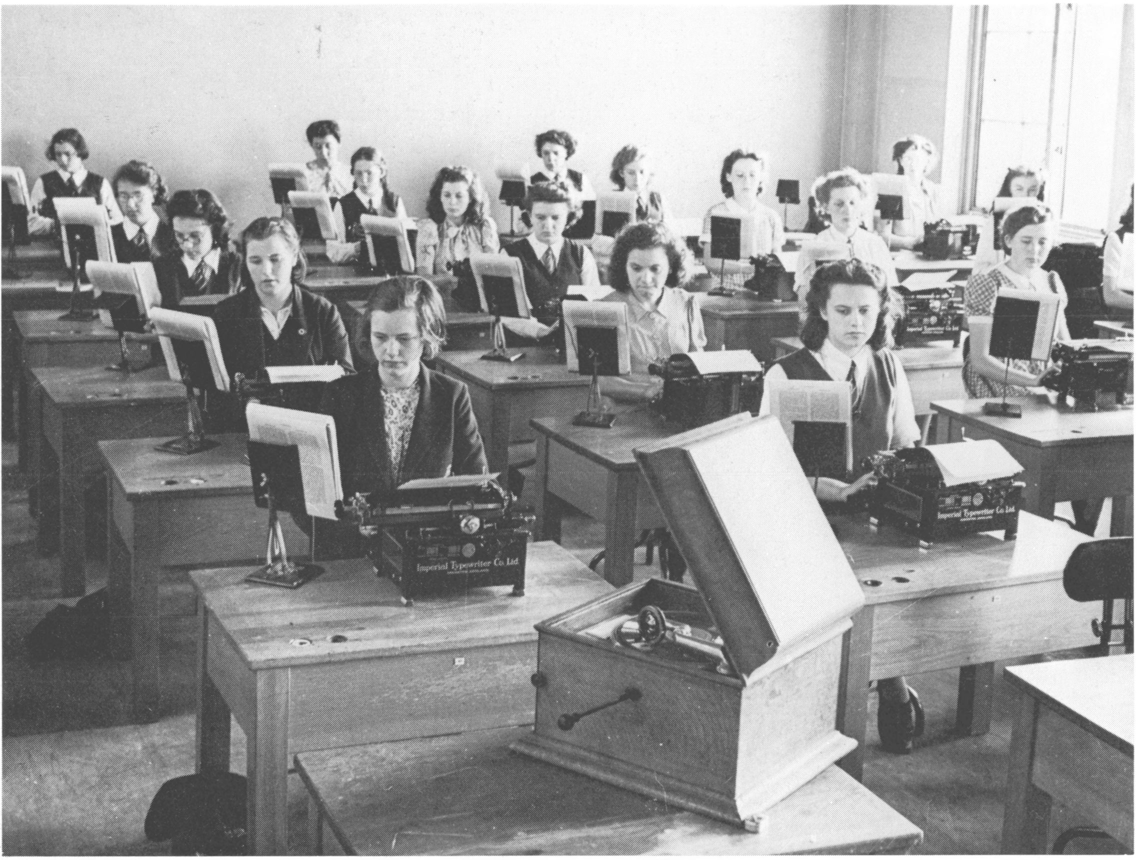

METROPOLITAN LINE

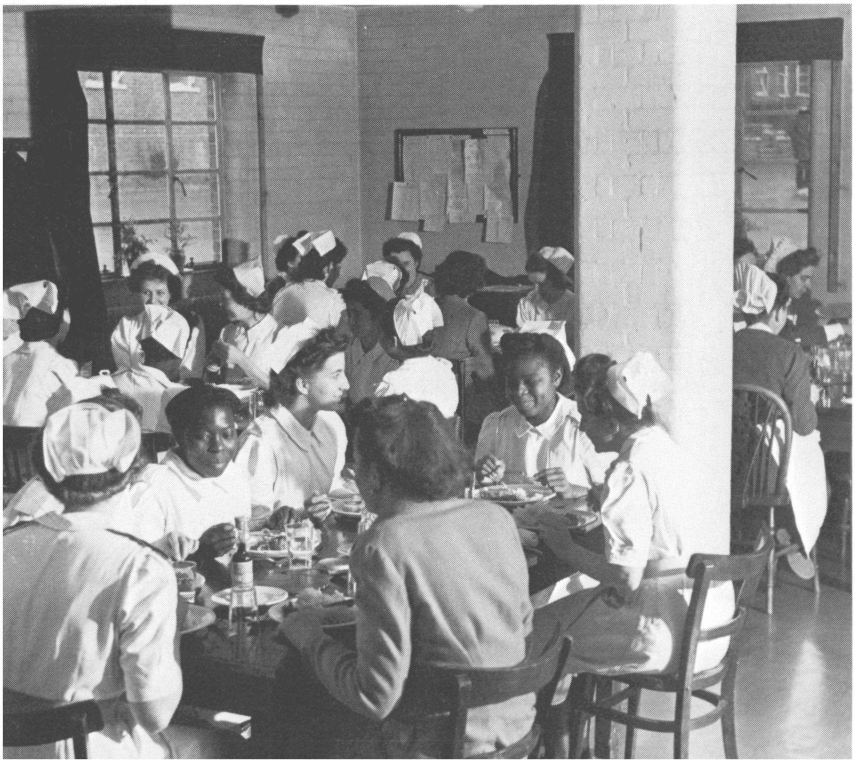
242
Londoners going to work by Underground in one of the new-style carriages divided into compartments by glass partitions and sliding doors, 1947.



▲ **243**
Reconstruction of the blitzed cities proceeded slowly. This bomb fell on a London cinema in 1940 and failed to explode; it was defused and removed in 1949.

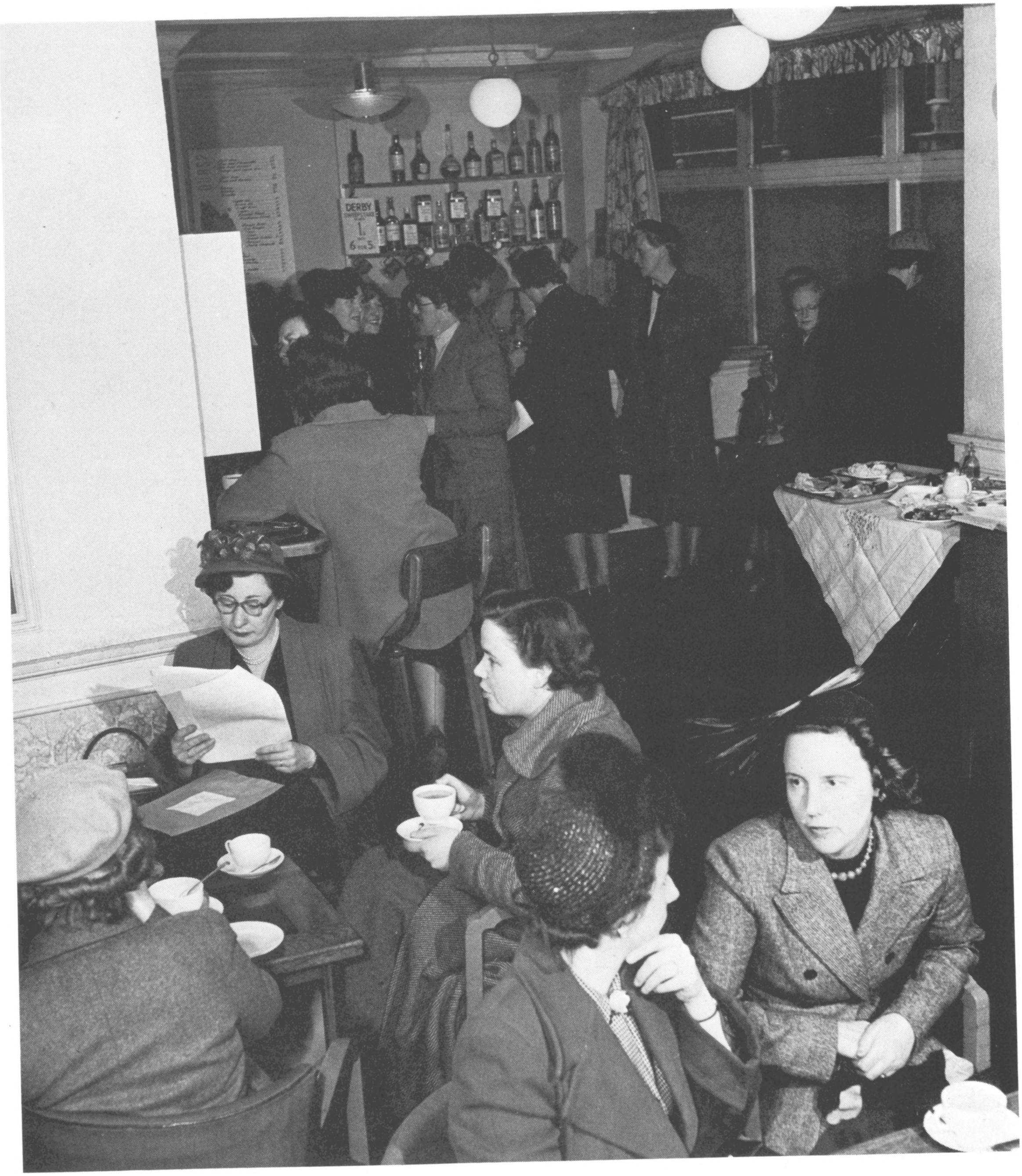
► **244**
When the bomb was taken away spectators raised 'a ragged but heartfelt cheer', according to the photographer.





▲ **245**
Typing class in a Technical College and School of Art. Girls could look forward to a wider variety of jobs than had been available to their mothers.

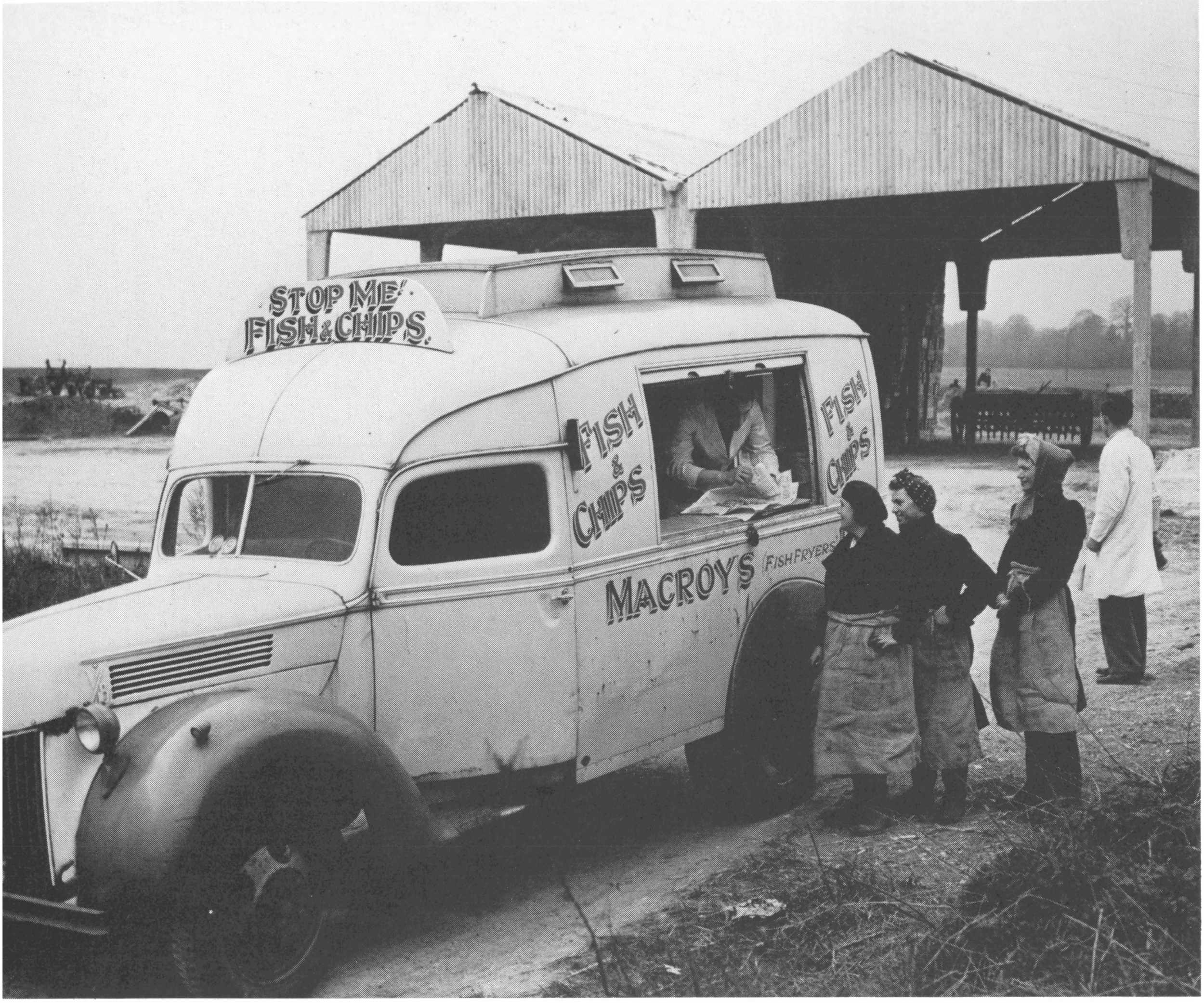
◀ **246**
Nurses, many from West Africa, in 1947.



247
The Women's Press Club, whose members included most of Fleet Street's top women journalists.

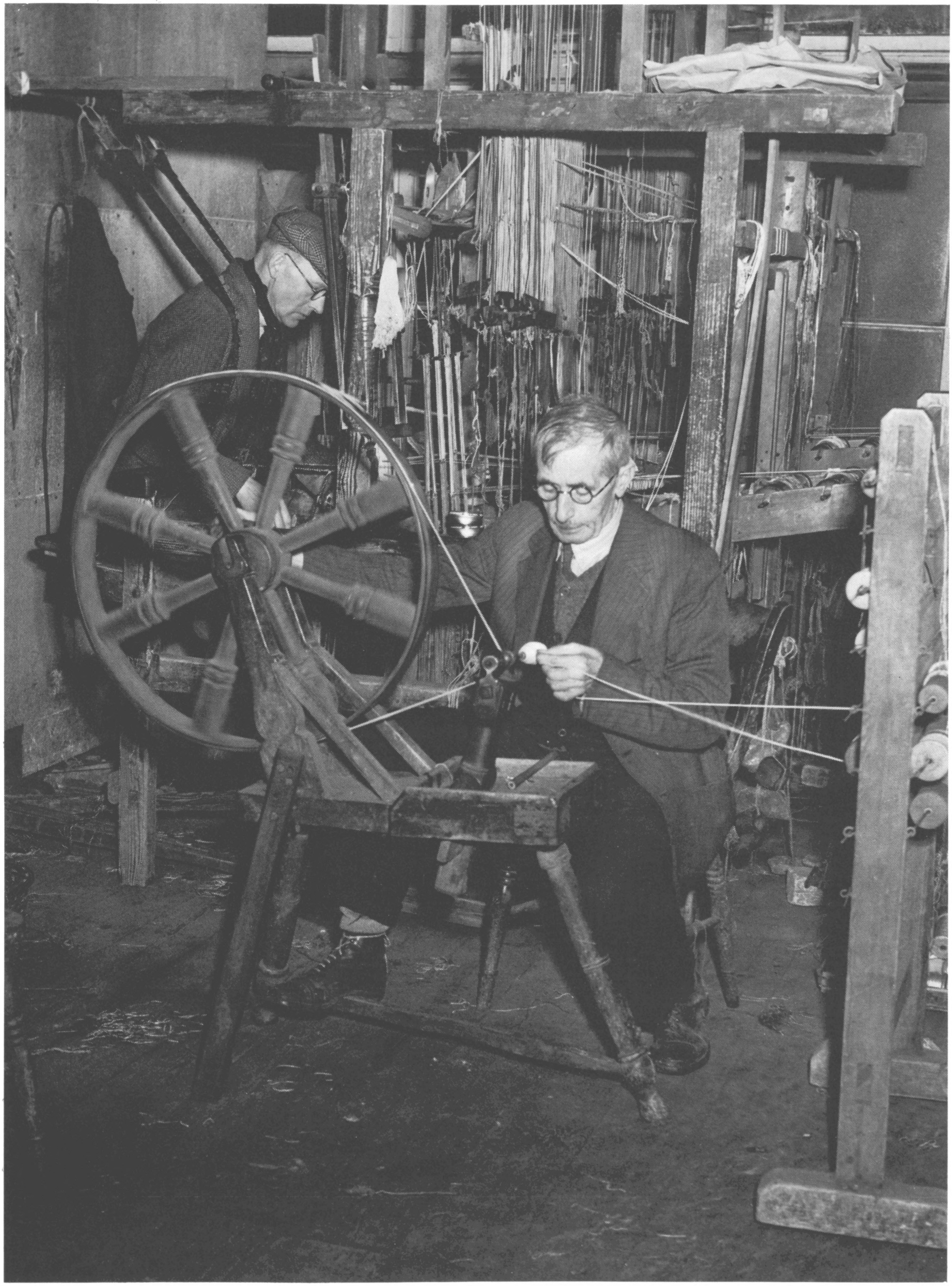
▲ **248**
Models from the Gaby Young Mannequin Agency hoping to be selected for an assignment.

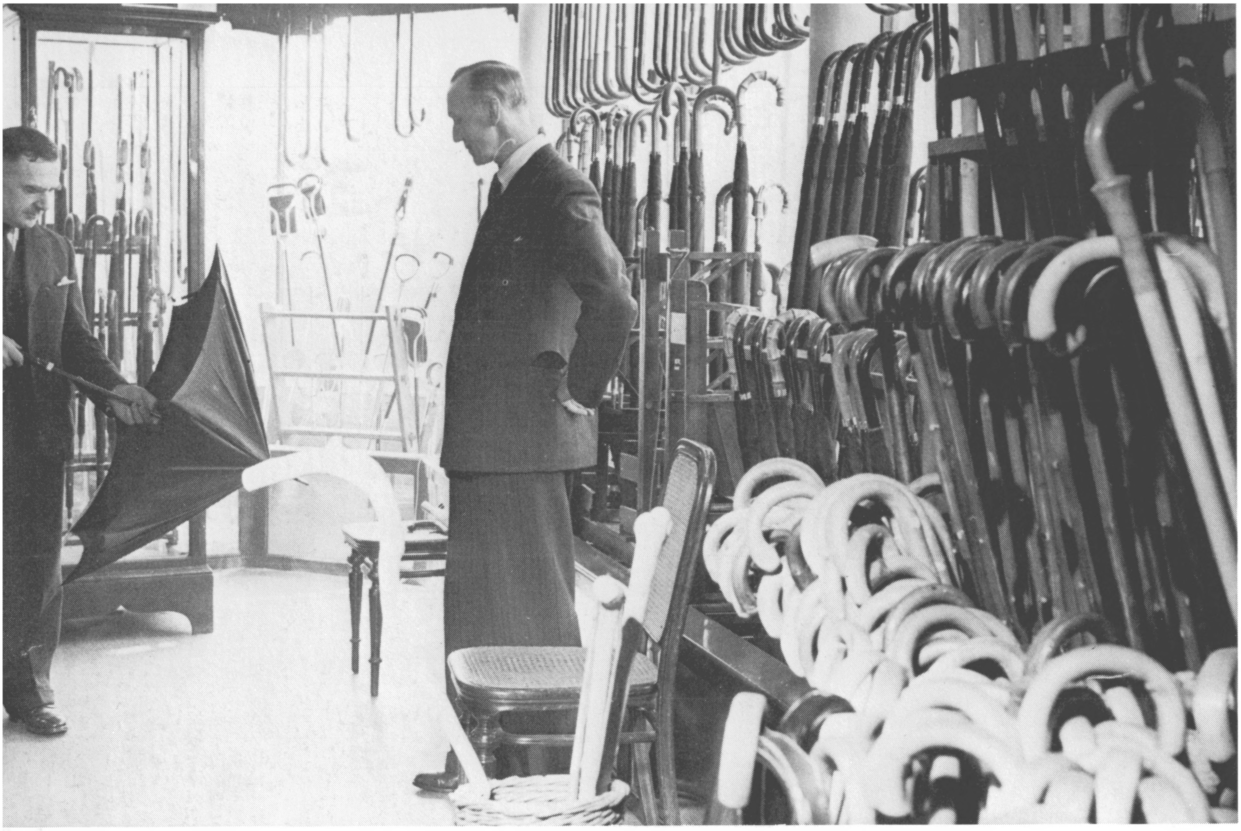
▲ **249**
A familiar job with a new name and a new status – one of the first Home Helps, 1946.

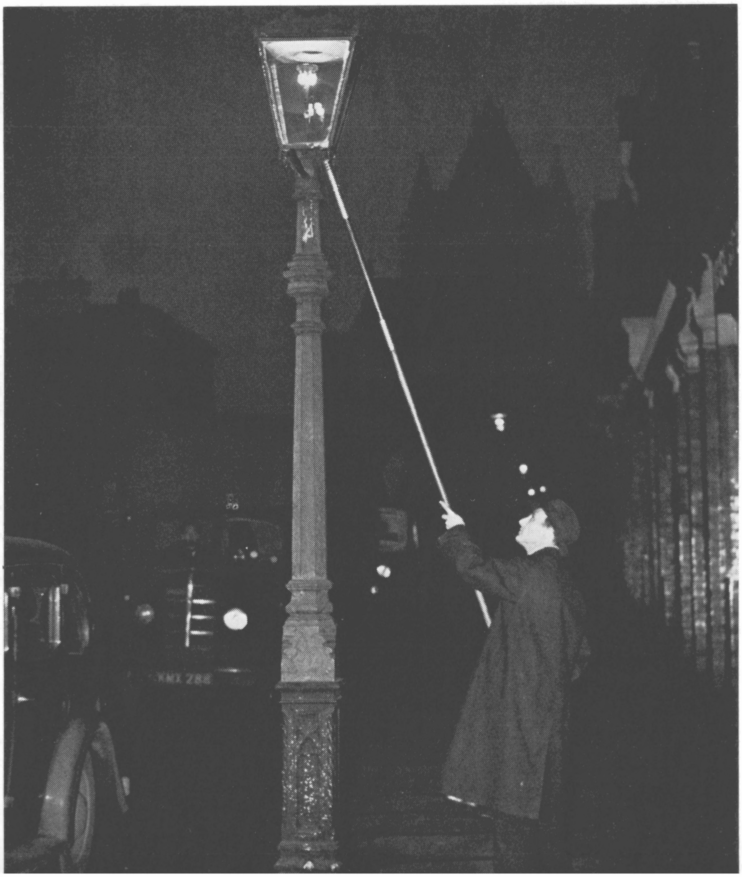

STOP ME' FISH & CHIPS.
FISH & CHIPS
FISH & CHIPS
MACROYS (FISH FRYERS)

▲ **250**
Fish and chips for women farm workers on a chilly March day 1948. The van is a converted government ambulance.

▶ **251**
Old crafts survived. In Clerkenwell a spinner and weaver made tassels, loops and fringes for the curtains of Clarence House, the London Home of Princess Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh.

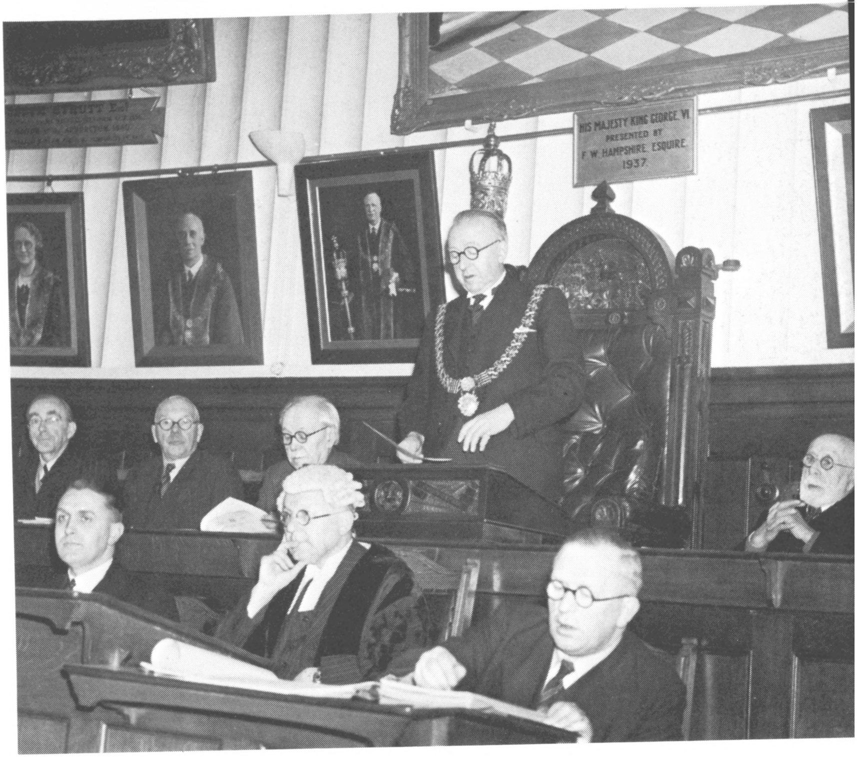






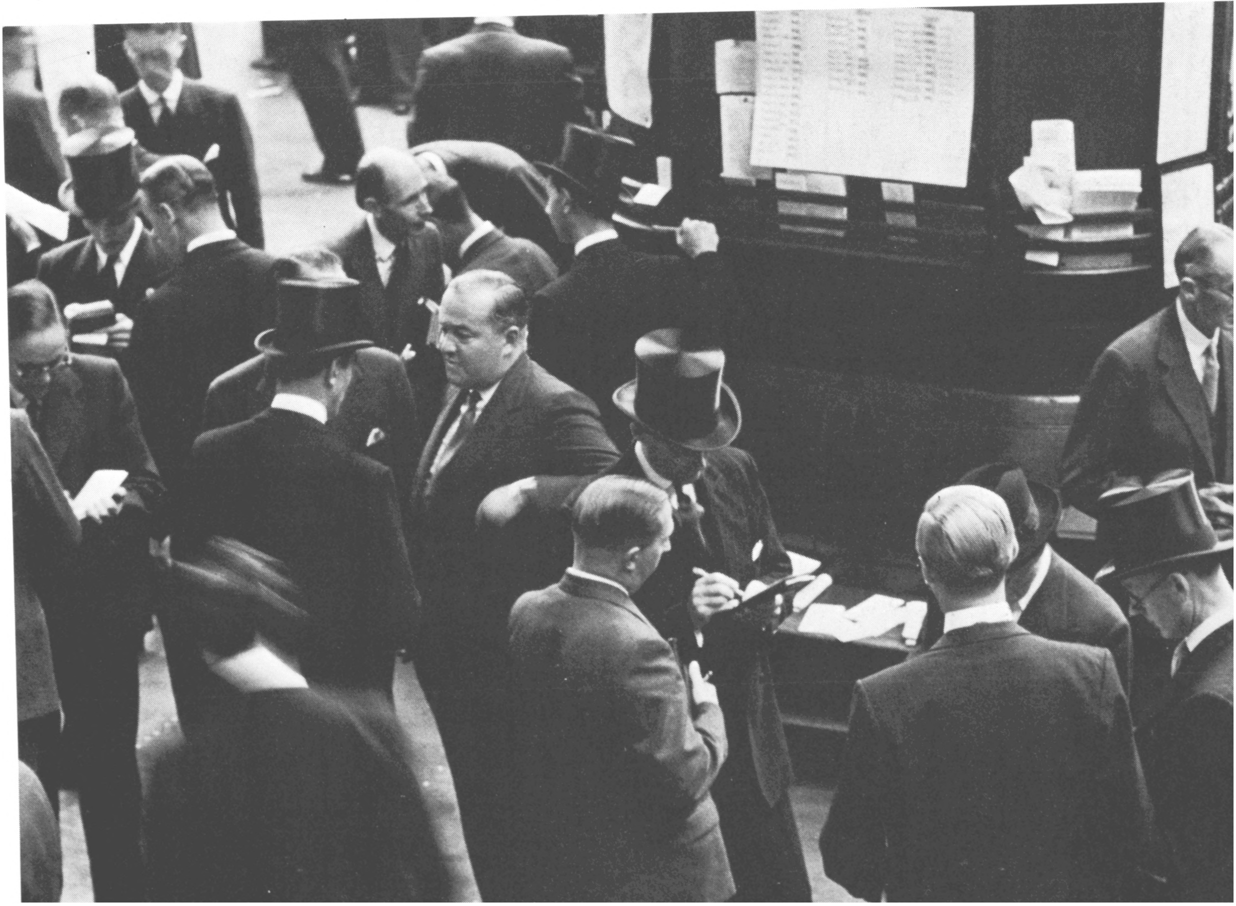
▲ **252**
Choosing an umbrella in 1948. This shop survives today.

◀ **253**
There were still fifty lamplighters employed in London in 1949. Their work started about three o'clock in the morning during mid-summer. These lamps were in Tower Bridge Road; the bridge can be seen in the background.


HIS MAJESTY KING GEORGE VI
PRESENTED BY
F. W. HAMPSHIRE, ESQUIRE.
1937

▶ **254**
Derby Council at work, 1946.

▼ **255**
The London Stock Exchange, where silk hats were still to be seen.



EXCHANGE TELEGRAPH Co
12
NEW YORK

◀ **256**
Friday night in the Stock Exchange. Its floor (18,500 square feet of it) was swept every night and washed every Friday by an army of charwomen.

▶ **257**
By the end of the forties things were looking up. At this canteen in the Isle of Grain refinery, dinners were one shilling and the wall notice stated: 'If you want more potatoes, please ask for them.'

▼ **258**
In Petticoat Lane there was no shortage by 1950 of 'Fancy Silk Briefs, only 2s. 6d.'

DINNERS
1/-
PLEASE, NO SWEARING
DINNER
IF YOU WANT MORE POTATOES
PLEASE ASK FOR THEM
MENU

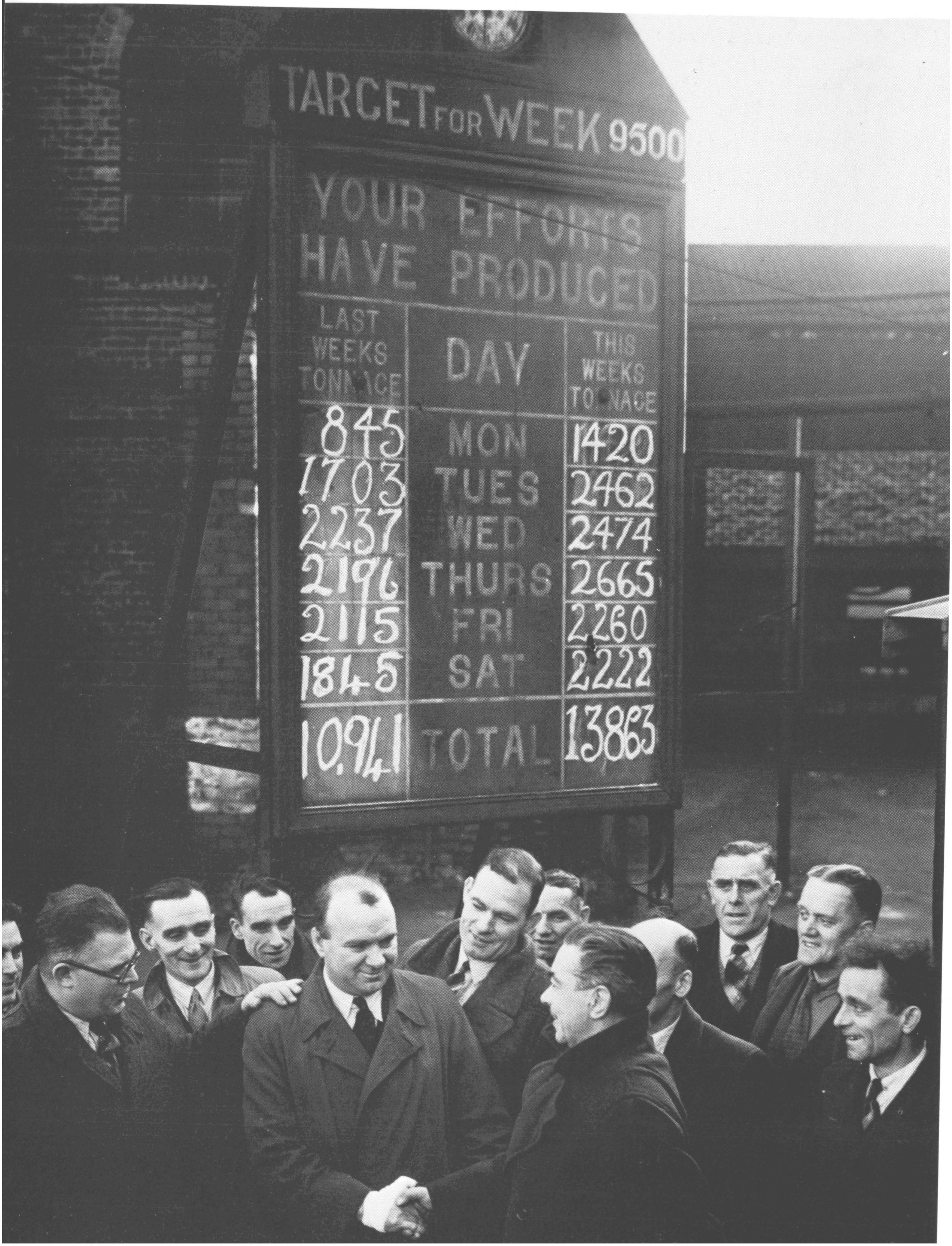
2'6
TODAY'S BARGAIN
FANCY SILK BRIEFS
ONLY
2'6
BARGAIN OFFER!
REDUCED TO
2'6

COPING WITH SHORTAGES

CRISIS NEW MONEY TALKS WITH THE U.S
DIRECTION
NG
WS

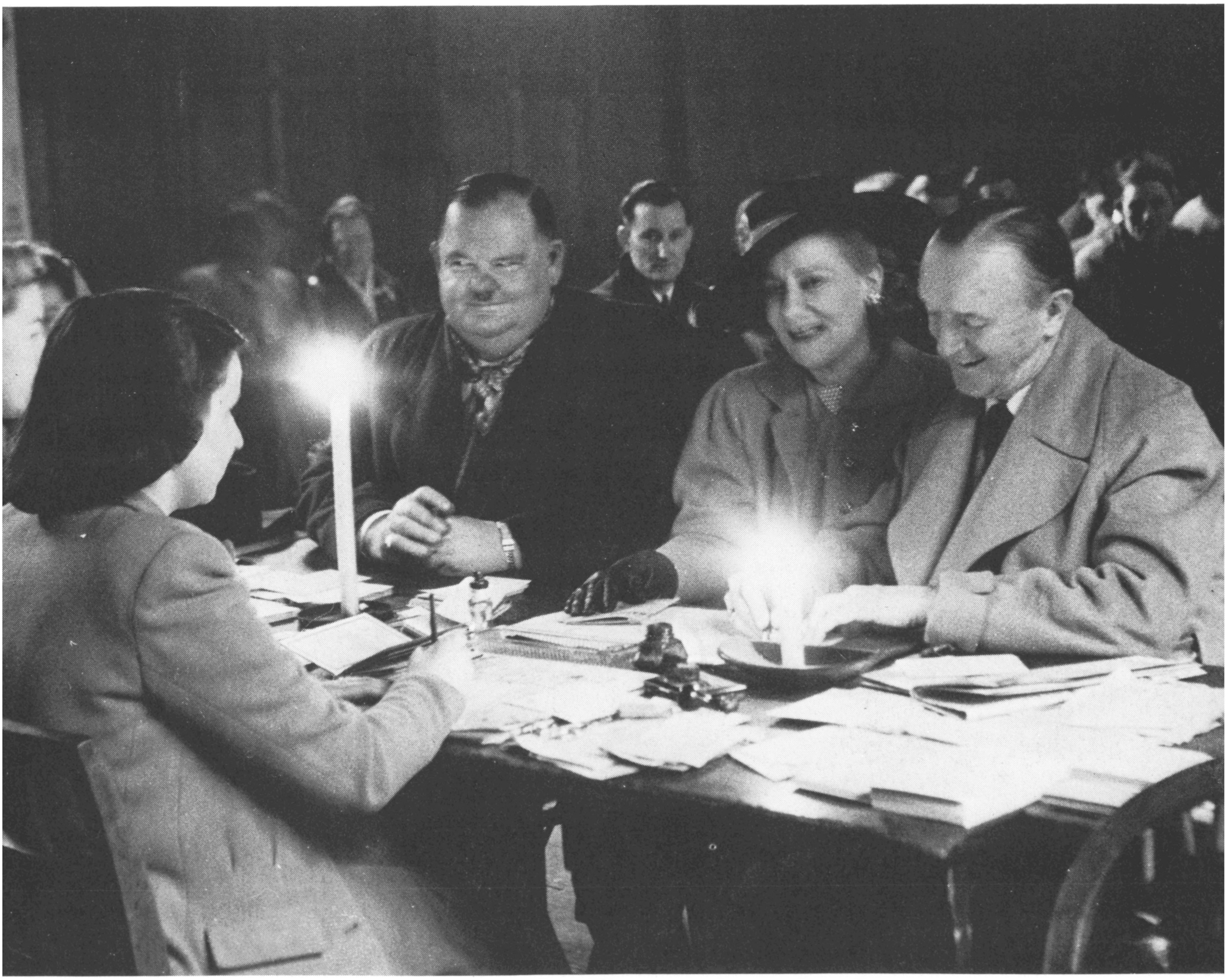
◀ **259**
From the end of the war until about 1952–3, Britain's economy was in a permanent state of crisis. In this photograph an American army sergeant was buying a newspaper in Trafalgar Square during the sterling crisis of 1947. By 1948 Marshall Aid was pouring into Europe.

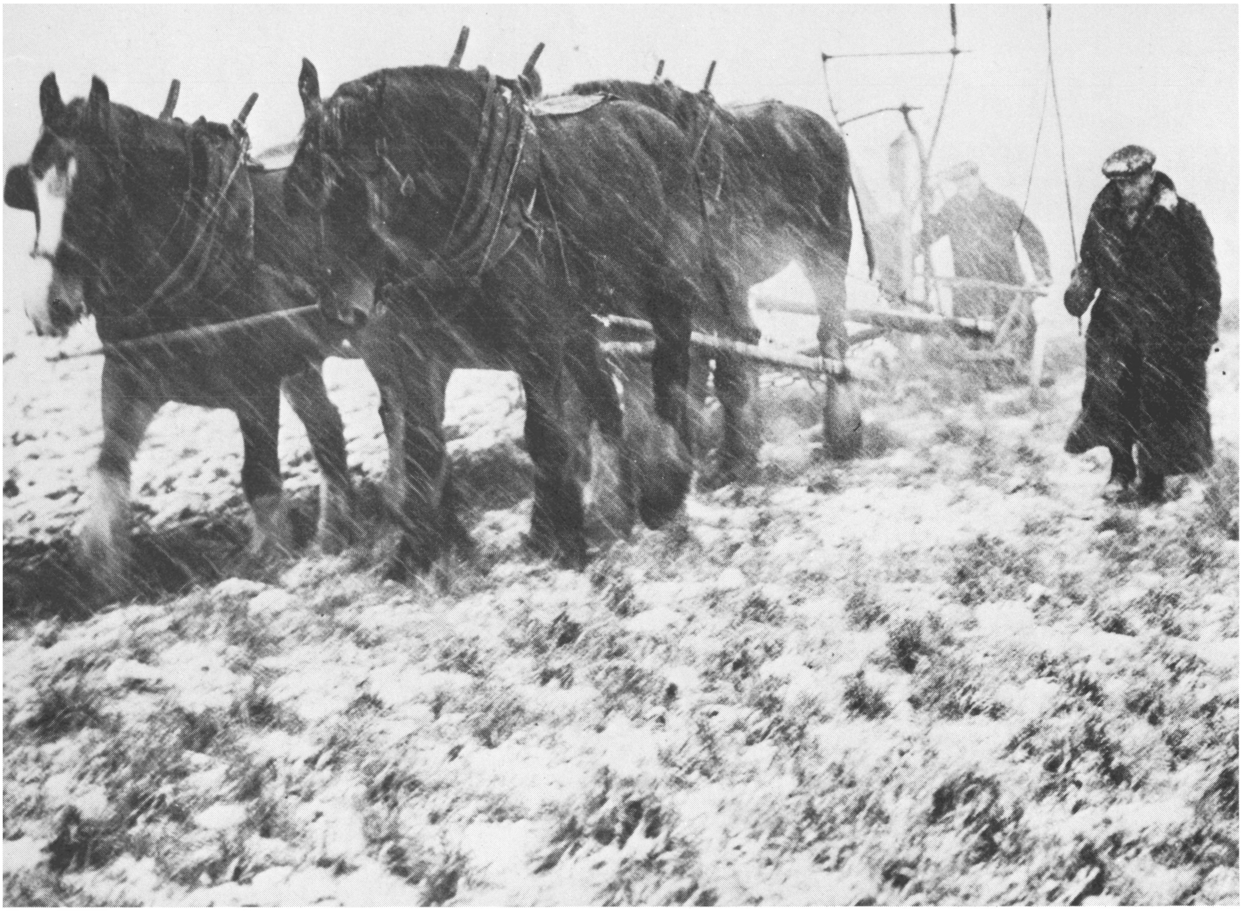
▶ **260**
Sir Stafford Cripps announced the devaluation of the pound on 19 September 1949. Brokers had to do their business in Throgmorton Street, outside the Stock Exchange, which was closed for the day.

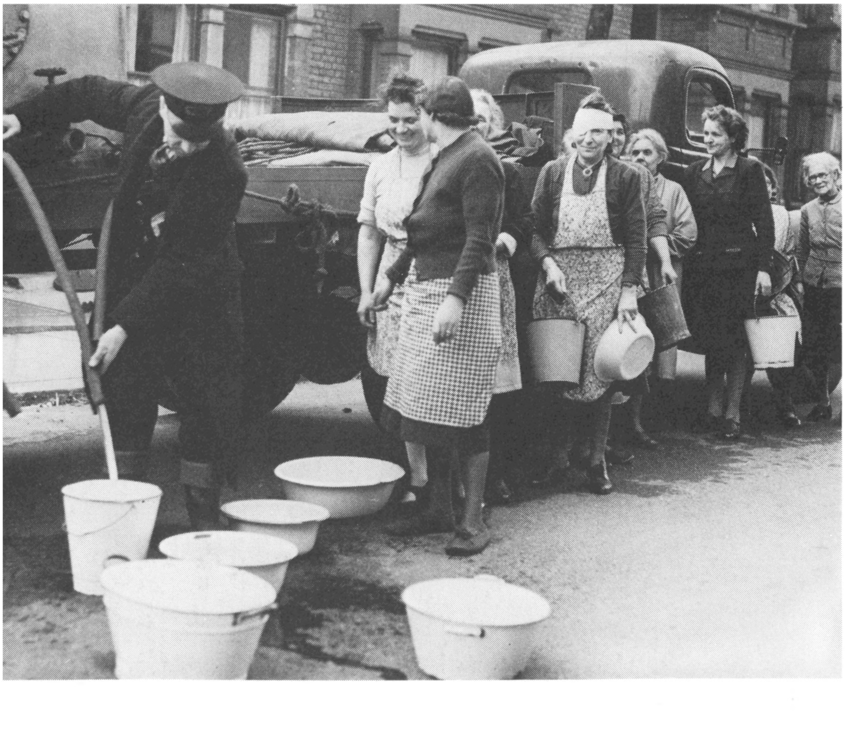

TARGET FOR WEEK 9500
YOUR EFFORTS HAVE PRODUCED
LAST WEEKS TONNACE
DAY
THIS WEEKS TONNACE
845 MON 1420
1703 TUES 2462
2237 WED 2474
2196 THURS 2665
2115 FRI 2260
1845 SAT 2222
10,941 TOTAL 13863

◀ **261**
These miners were congratulating themselves on record production at the end of 1946, but the coal shortage was acute.

▼ **262**
By early 1947 the hard winter, the run-down state of the mines and the lack of transport to move the coal, combined to bring Britain to a standstill. Comedians Laurel and Hardy, on a visit in February 1947, found themselves queuing for ration cards – by candlelight.



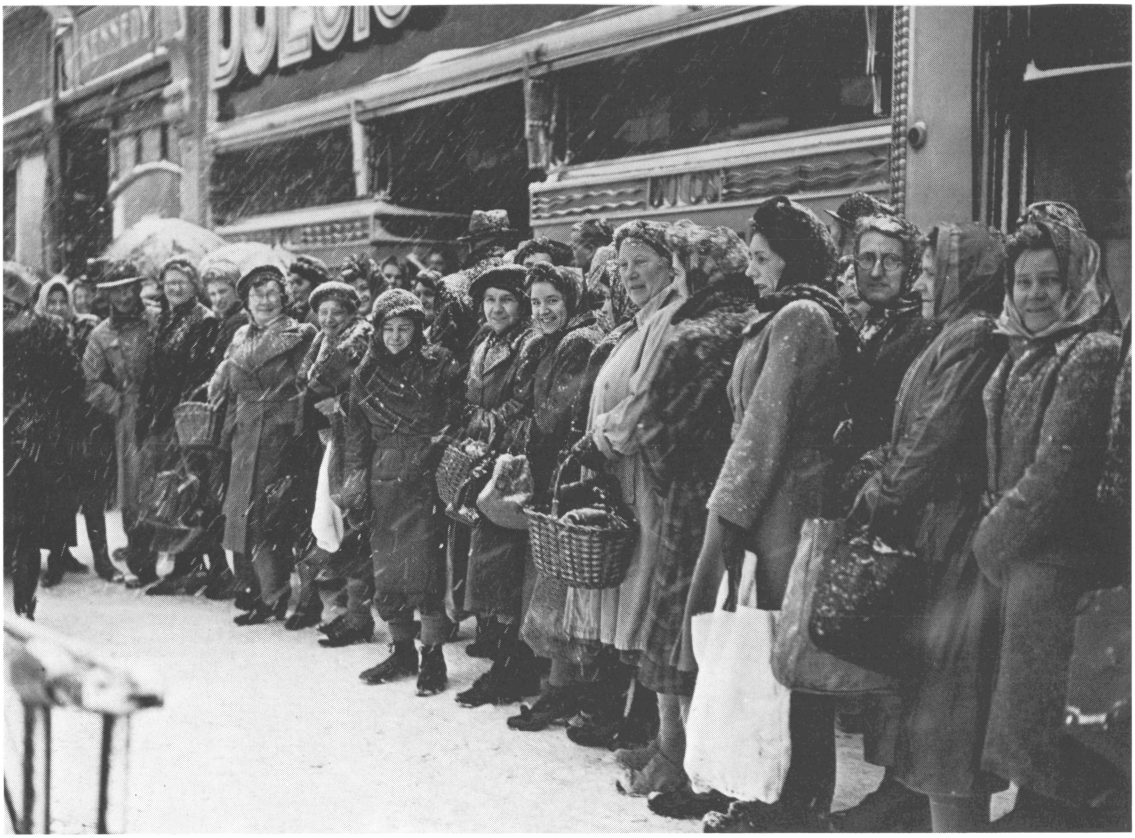




263
The disastrous winter of 1947 was followed by floods, which in some places cut off the water supply.

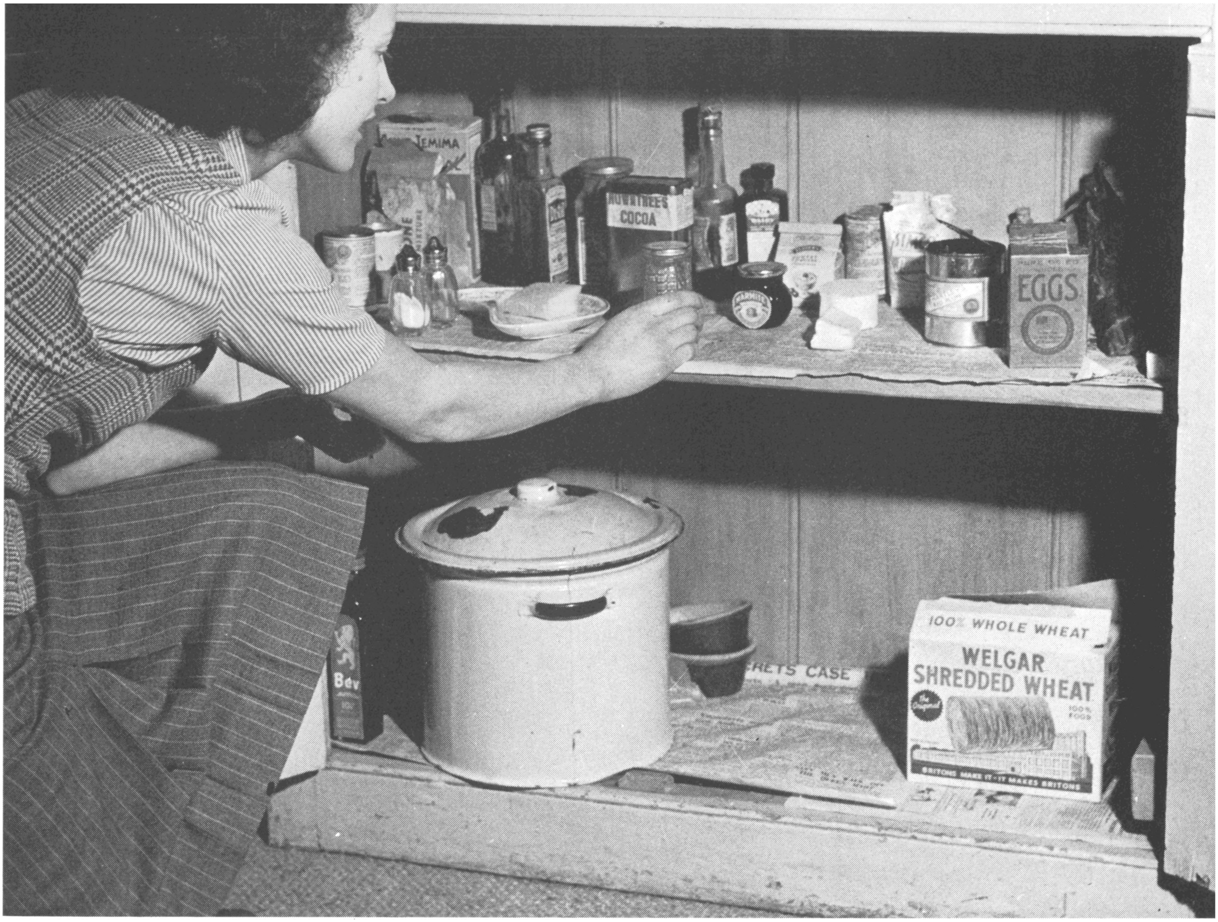
▲ **264**
Coal was desperately short all over Europe. In Dublin mountains of peat were stacked in Phoenix Park.

▶ **265**
January 1947 – a German prisoner-of-war shovelling snow off a farmhouse roof in Perthshire.

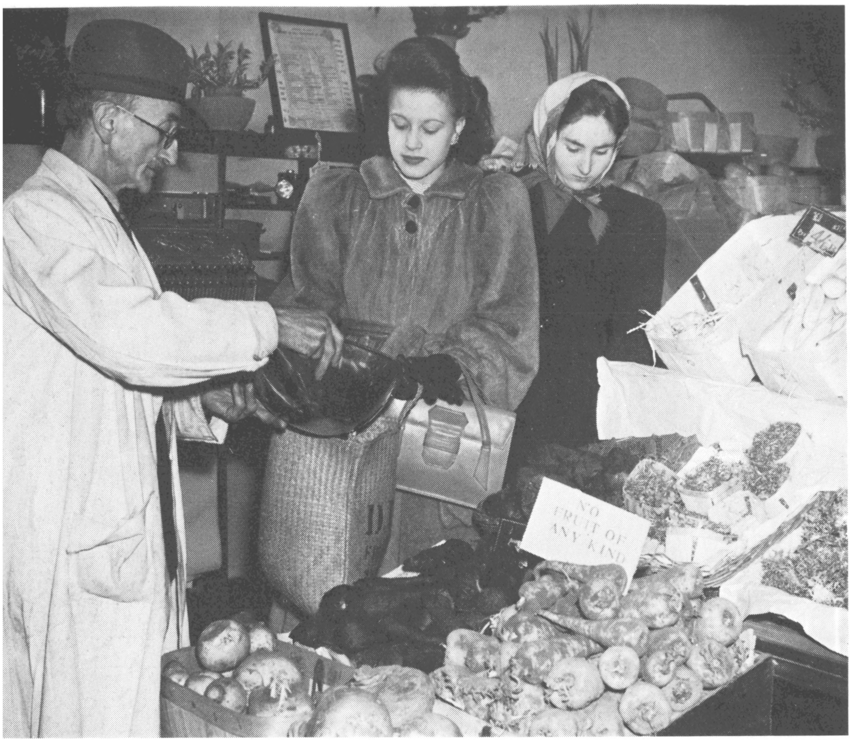


▲ **266**
Housewives queuing for food put on a brave face for the camera. In 1947 every woman in Britain was spending at least one hour of every day waiting in a queue.

◀ **267**
Mothers with young babies received an extra ration of soap for the nappies, but there was not enough.

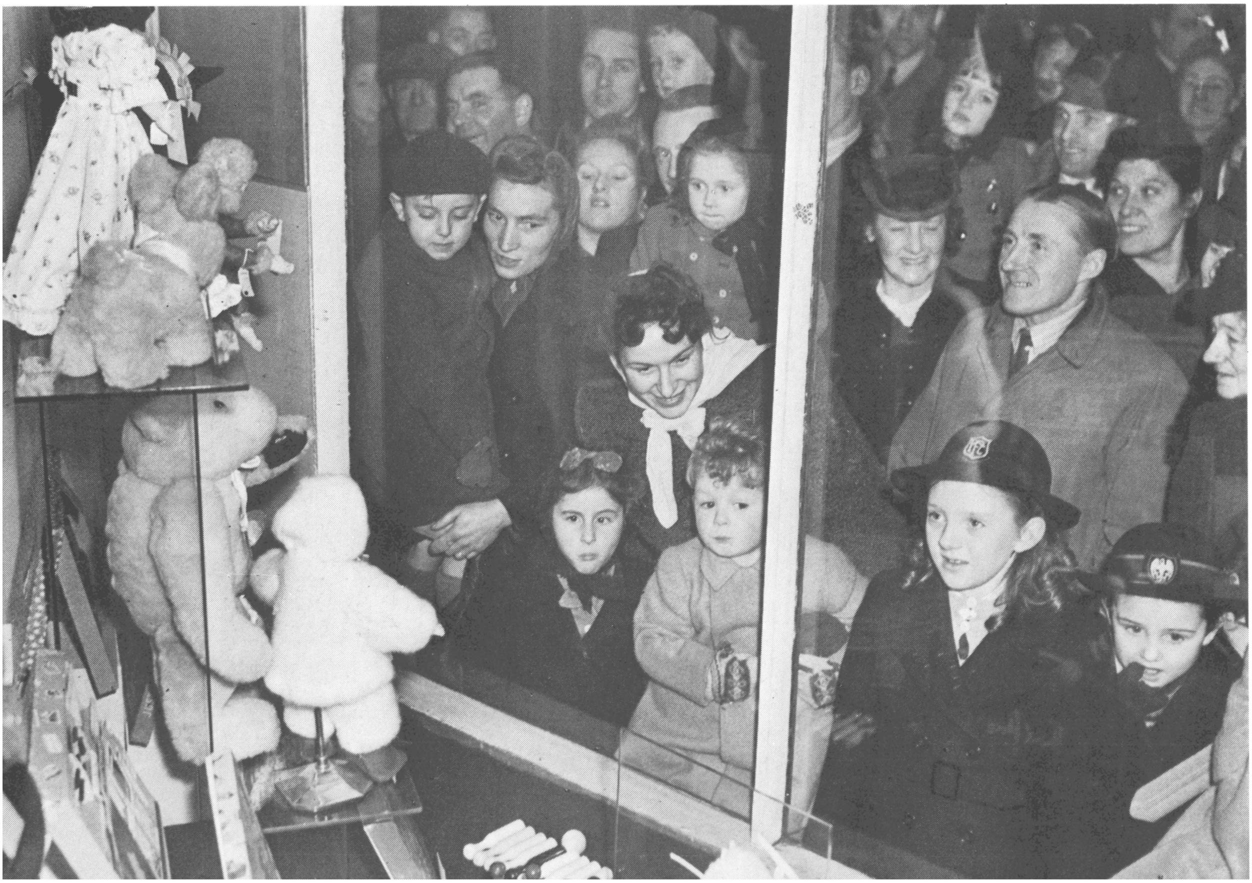

AUNT JEMIMA
ROWNTREE'S COCOA
MARMITE
EGGS
100% WHOLE WHEAT
WELGAR SHREDDED WHEAT
100% FOOD
BRITONS MAKE IT—IT MAKES BRITONS
Bev

268
The cold was all the harder to bear because of the lack of nourishment, particularly fats. The 1948 ration was one ounce of cooking fat per person per week. This cupboard, photographed in 1946, was typical of thousands of British larders. Even dried eggs had disappeared from the shops; the packet in the picture had been hoarded. At one village raffle the prize was a solitary fresh egg.


NO FRUIT OF ANY KIND

◀ **269**
At the greengrocer, 1947 – 'No fruit of any kind'.

▼ **270**
Few toys at Selfridges, Christmas 1946.



▶ **271**
The fight for food was hampered by the appalling weather. Farmers ploughed by night to catch up after the long winter.

▼ **272**
'Don't ask for bread unless you really want it'.

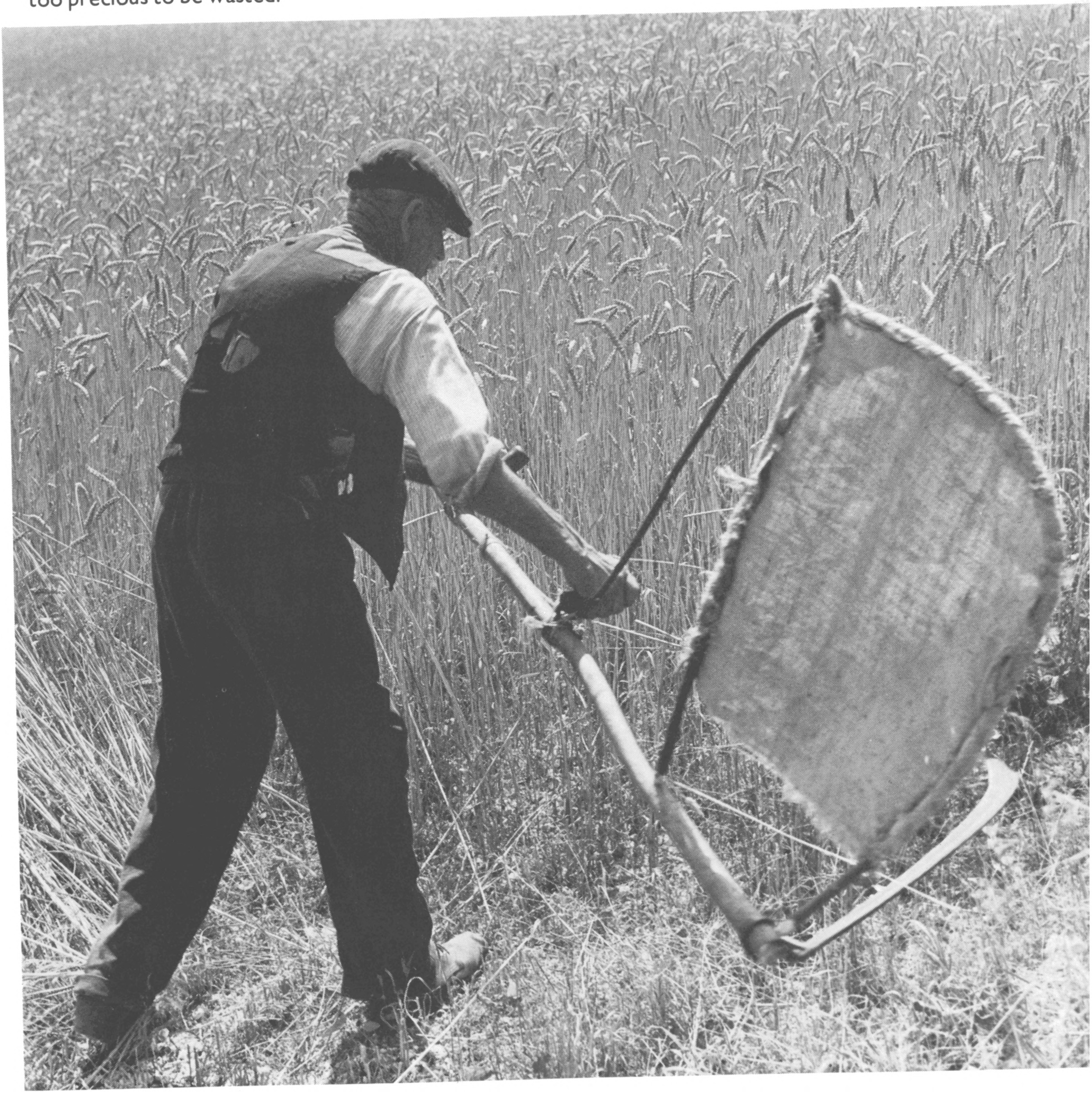
Don't
ask for
bread unless
you really
want it

273
Spring 1947: sowing the corn by hand on land still too wet for machinery after the melting of the snow. Bread was rationed from 21 July 1946; this had never happened during the war.

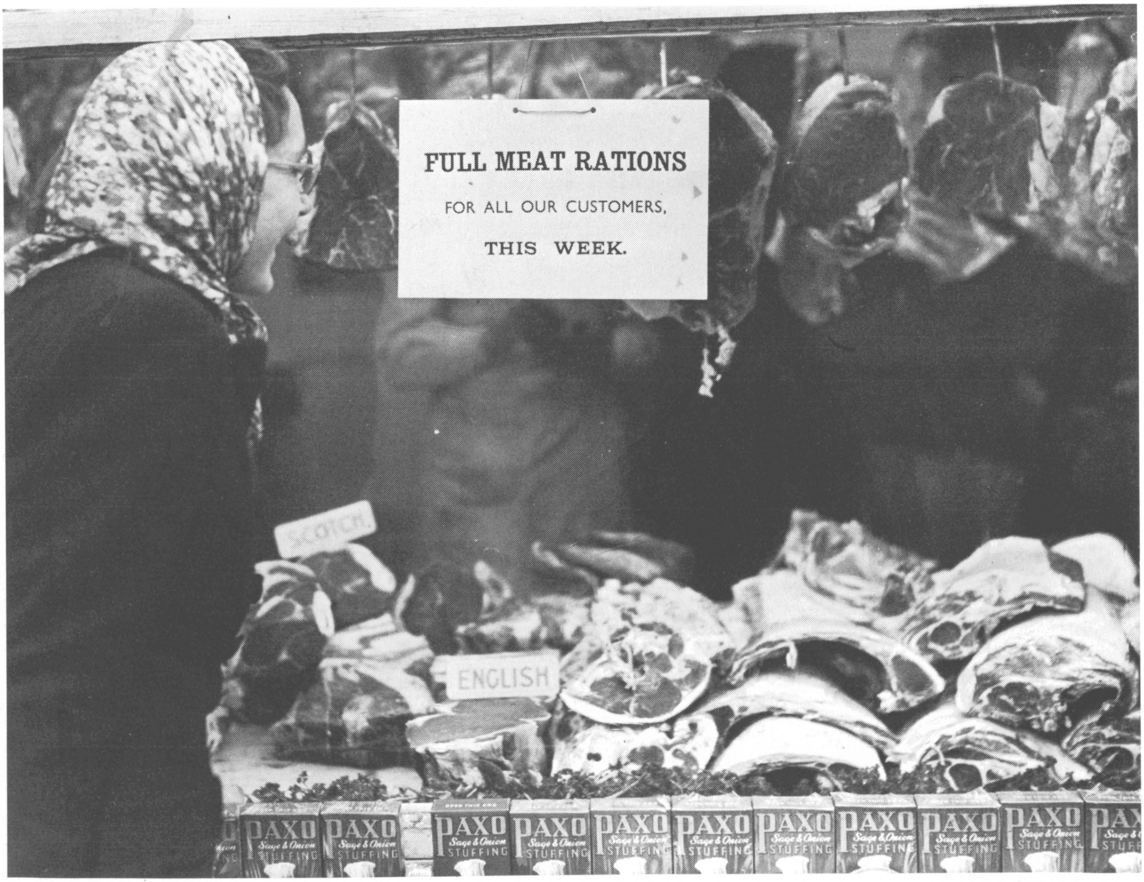
TRUSTY

◀ **274**
Road verges were ploughed, sown with barley and harvested, on the Barnet By-pass in Middlesex, 1948.

▼ **275**
A man 'scything an entry' for the reaper binder into a field of wheat – the headland was too precious to be wasted.

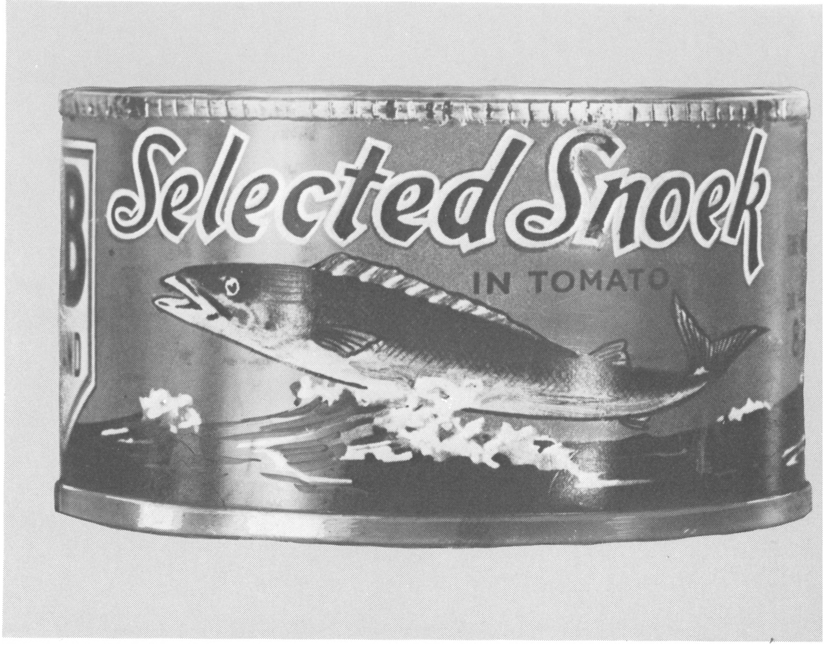


276
This butcher's customers felt themselves lucky to get their full meat ration, which in 1948 was thirteen ounces per week for the average man.


FULL MEAT RATIONS
FOR ALL OUR CUSTOMERS,
THIS WEEK.
SCOTCH
ENGLISH
PAXO
Sage & Onion
STUFFING

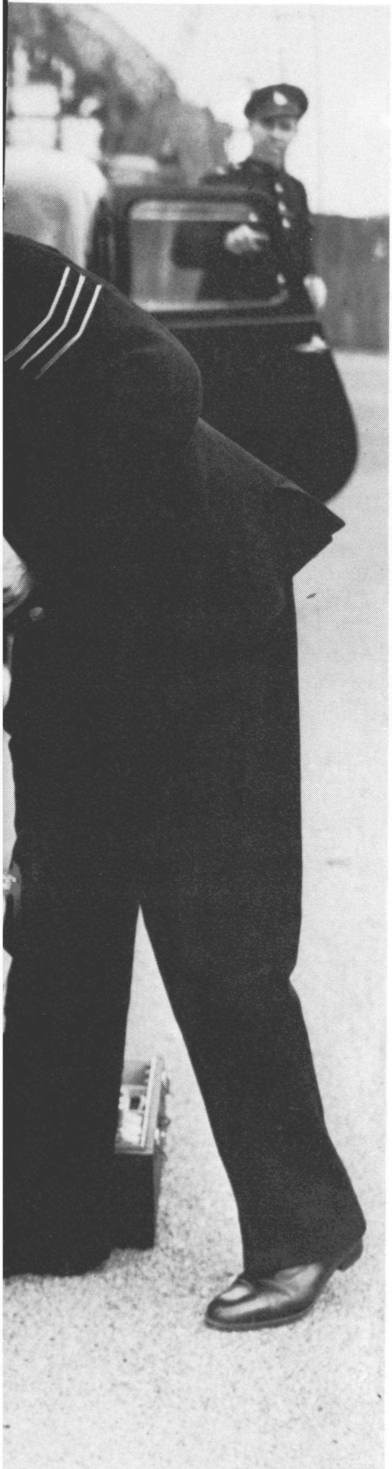
▶ **277**
A tin of the reviled Snoek, a barracuda-type fish, which in spite of the vigorous promotion by the Government from 1947 to 1948 was too disagreeable for even hungry Britain to swallow.

▼ **278**
Housewives queuing for potatoes in the summer of 1947. By 1948 the daily rations were well below wartime level.


Selected Snoek
IN TOMATO

Fancy Draper
J. SOLOV
& Outfitter
12

AYP 600



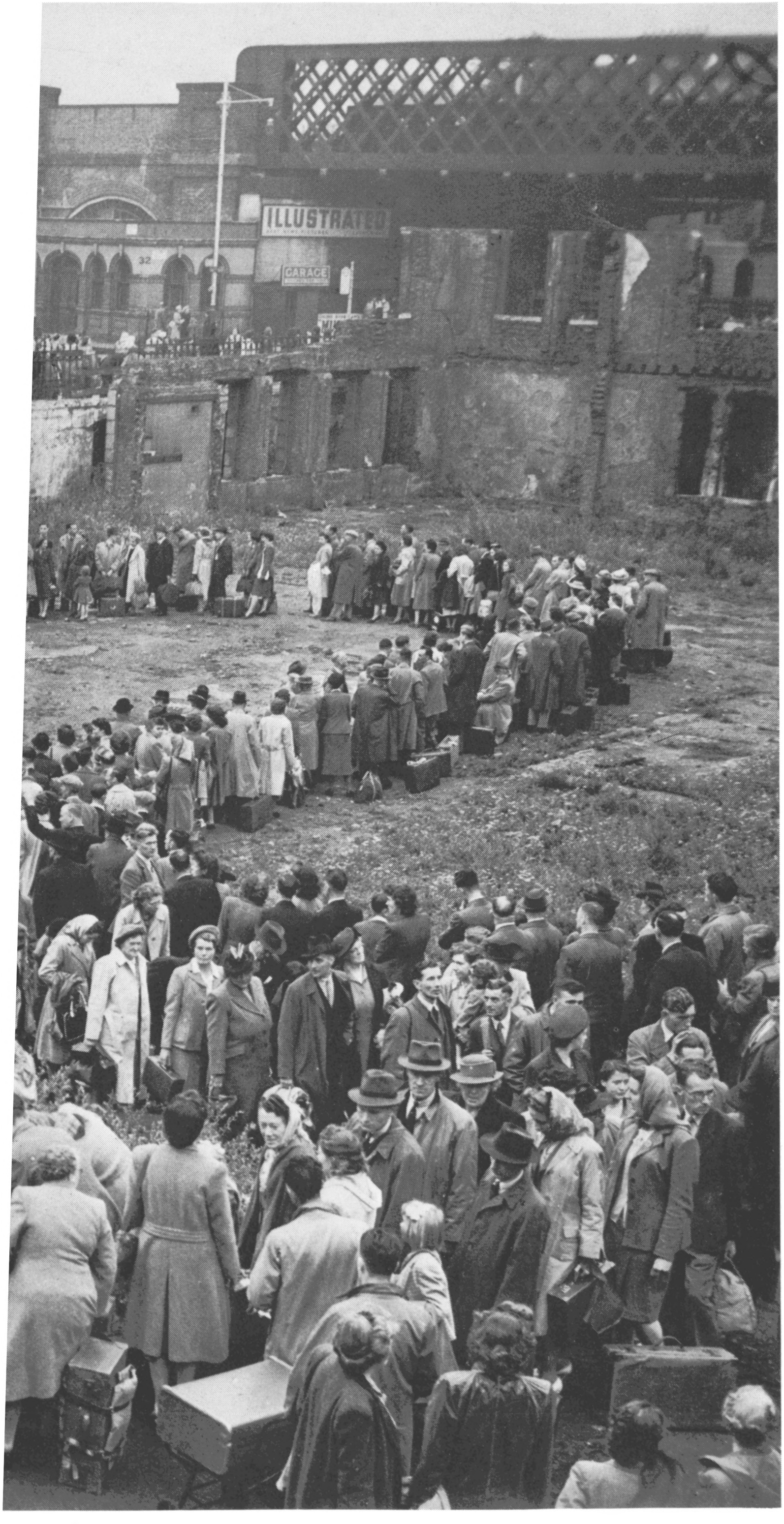
◀ **279**

Petrol for private use was almost unobtainable from 1947 to 1948, even on the black market. Petrol could easily be tested for the presence of a chemical which could prove whether it was for private use or had been acquired illegally.

▼ **280**

A local dance orchestra was transported entirely by bicycle – December 1947.

CAFE


ILLUSTRATED
GARAGE
32

281
Without cars or petrol, people went on holiday by train: Waterloo Station in July 1948.

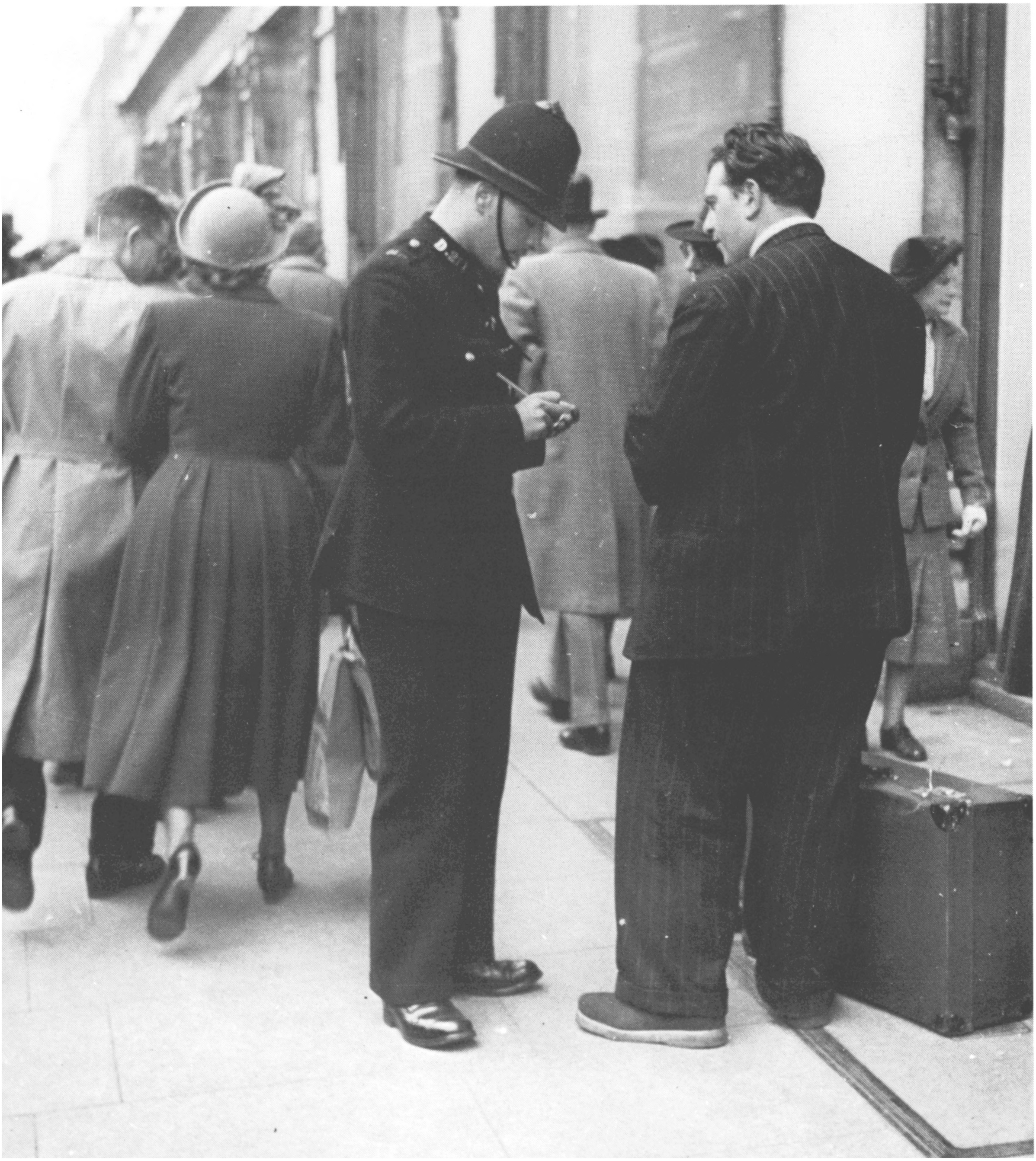
◀ **282**
Saleswomen crowding to deal with the rush at the nylon counter in Selfridges, December 1946.

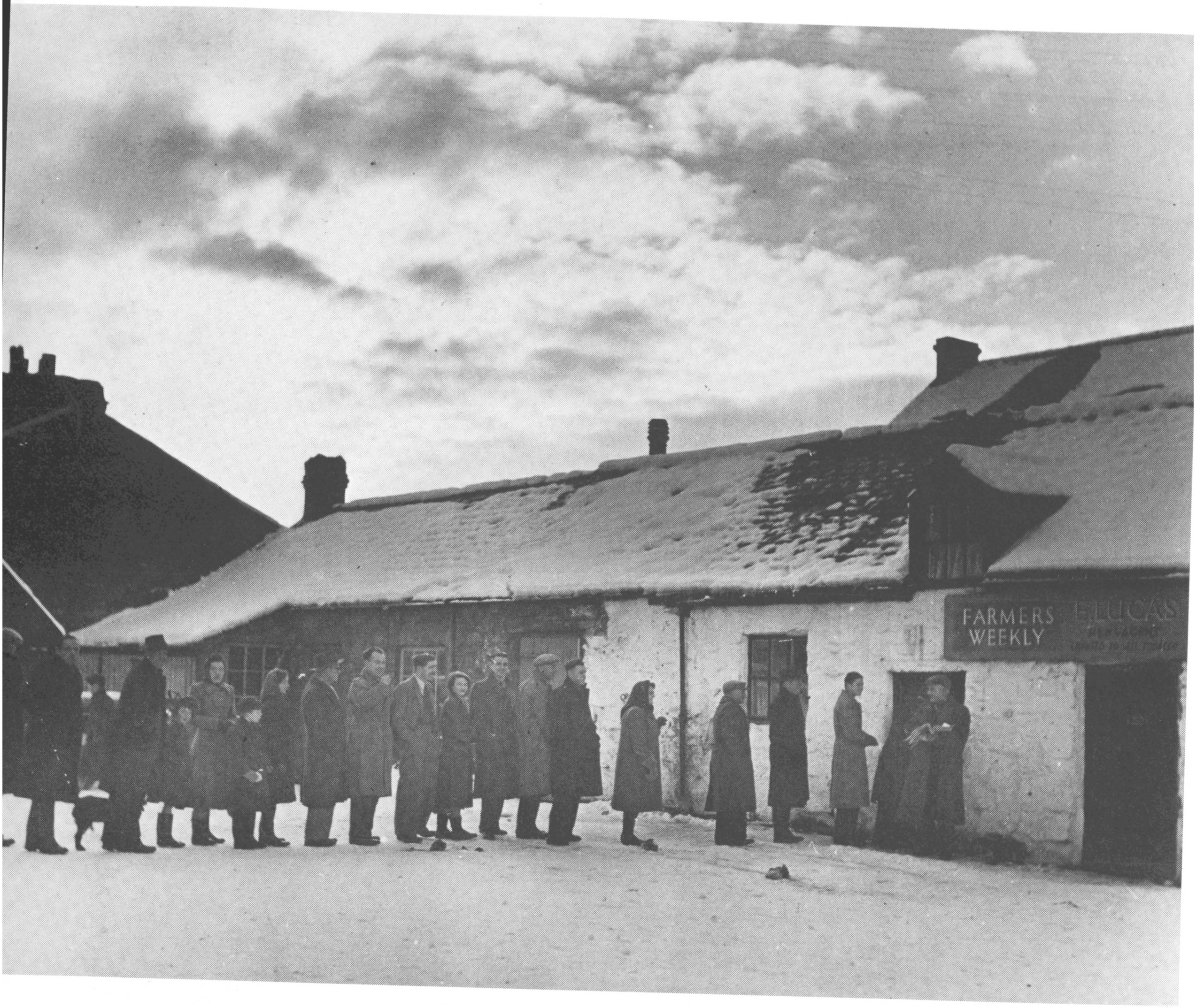
▼ **283**
In an effort to control the black market 'Spivs and Drones', the Registration for Employment Order came into force in January 1948; street sellers were obliged to 'sign on' at the Labour Exchange.

NUFIX
Gillette
LTD
ISTRIBUTORS
419
MILLET

◀ **284**
A hawker selling nylons illegally, on the pavements in Oxford Street. Look-out men were posted to warn of the arrival of police.

▼ **285**
Sometimes the police got there first.





▲ **286**
Queues became part of the British way of life, this paper queue was photographed at Bala in Wales, 1950.

► **287**
In 1949 some goods came off the ration, but as Sir Stafford Cripps, then Chancellor, said: 'Our own consumption requirements have to be the last on the list of priorities.' Rationing did not disappear finally until meat came off the ration in July 1954.

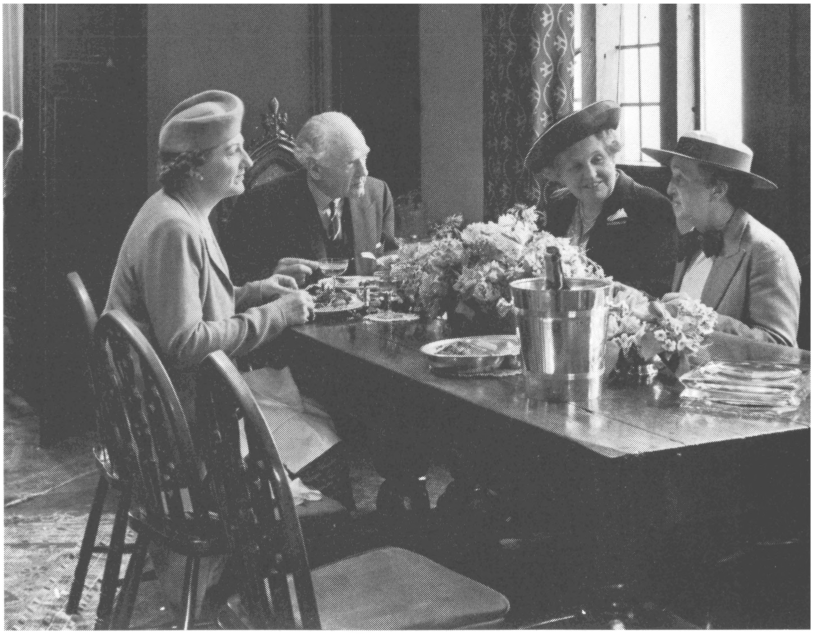
594
NOW Coupon FREE
2 Piece Suits
£11/13/2

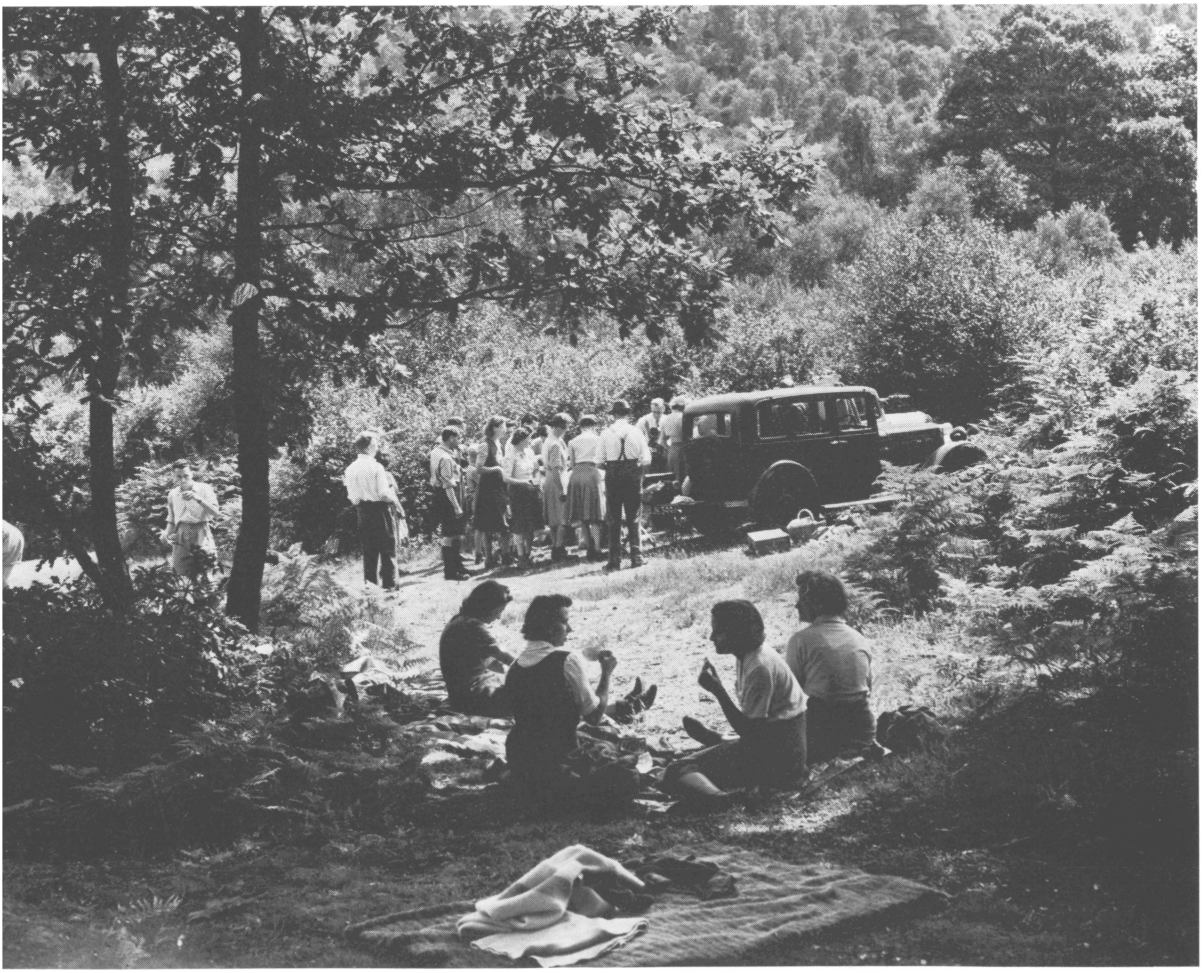
TIME OFF

◀ **288**
Going for a stroll down a London street.

▶ **289**
Lunch at a Surrey hotel.

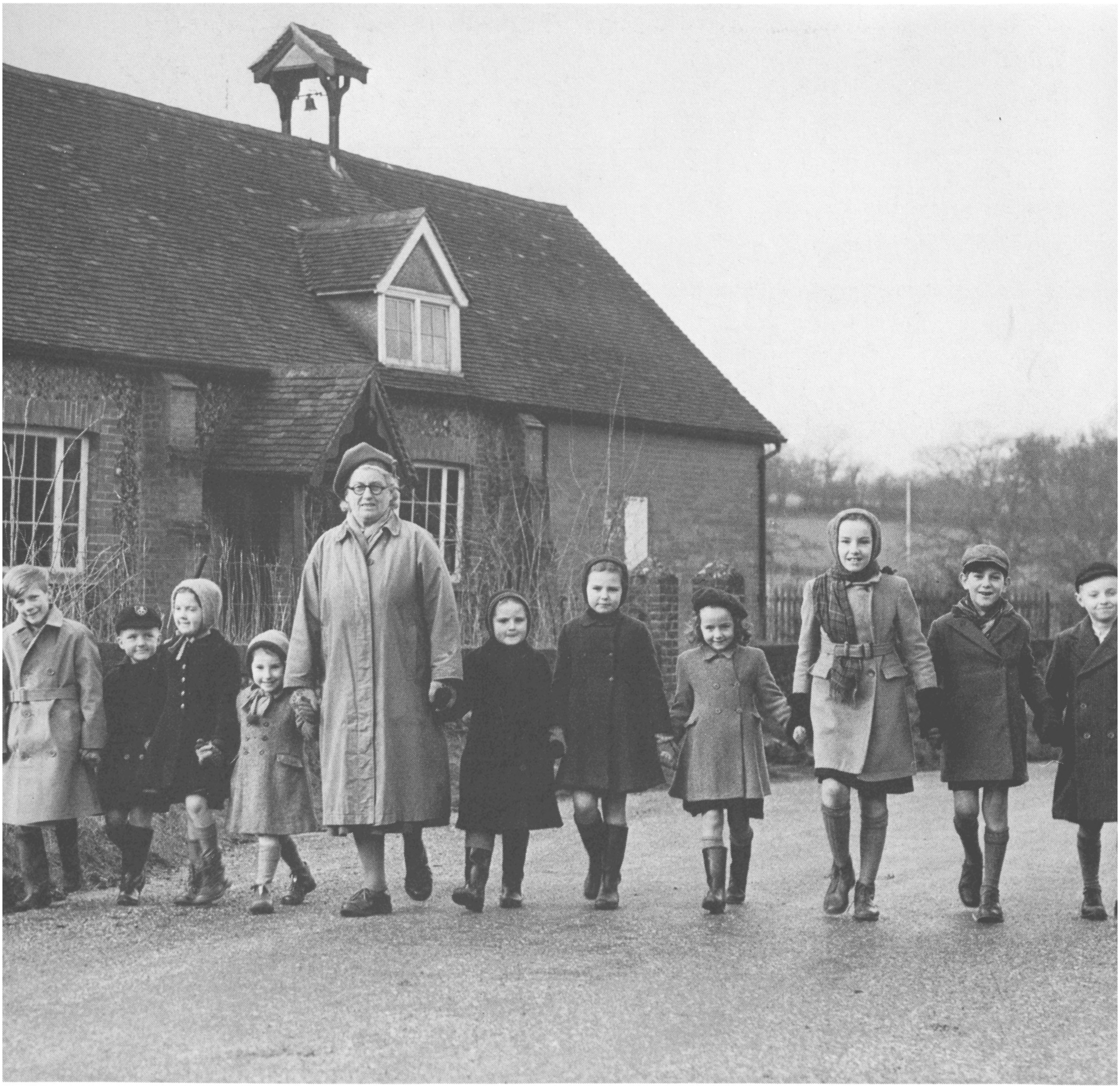
▼ **290**
Ramblers' picnic in Savernake Forest.



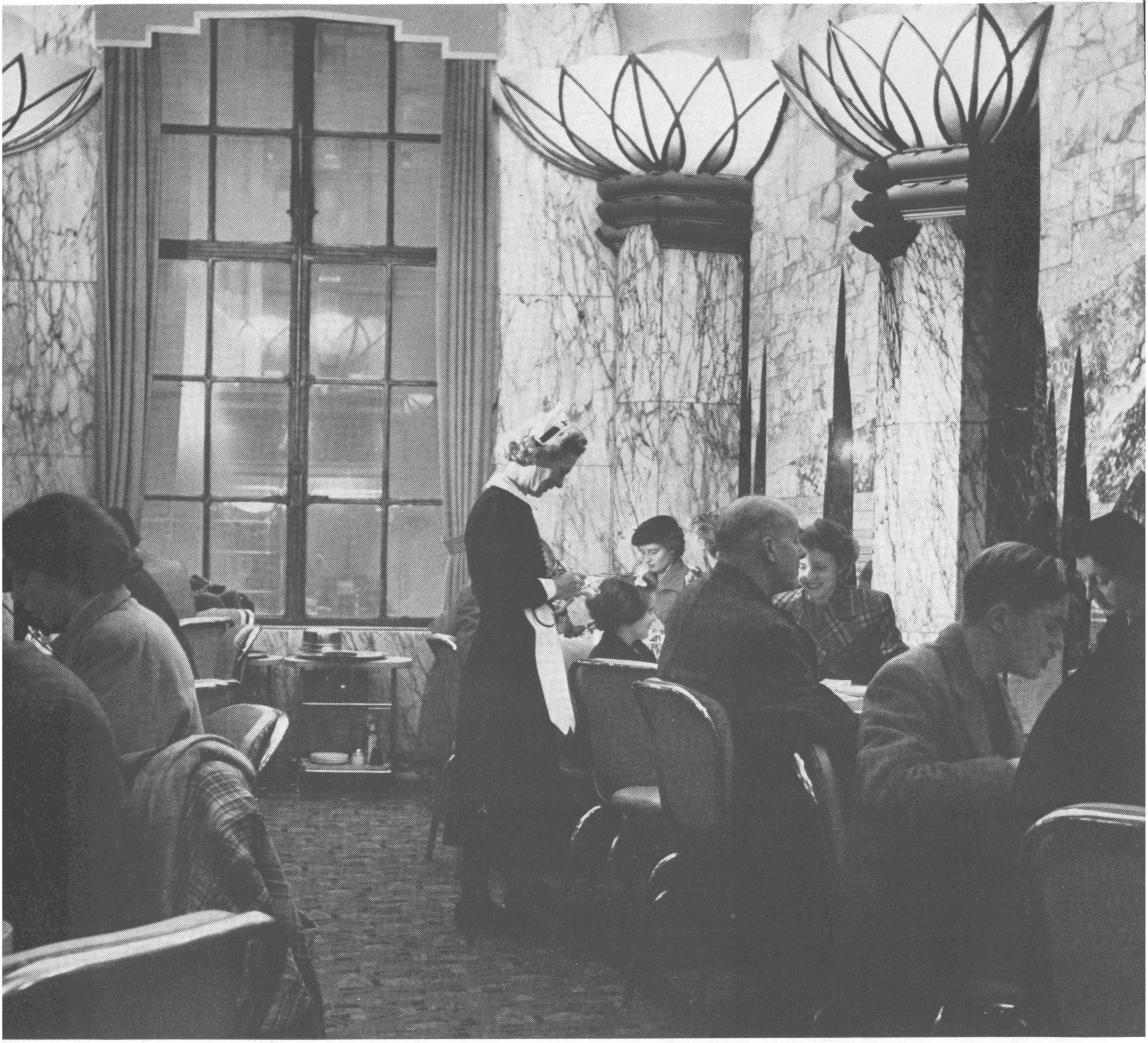


▼ **291**
Village school children walking home.

▶ **292**
Whit Monday at the bar of the Palace Hotel, Southend.



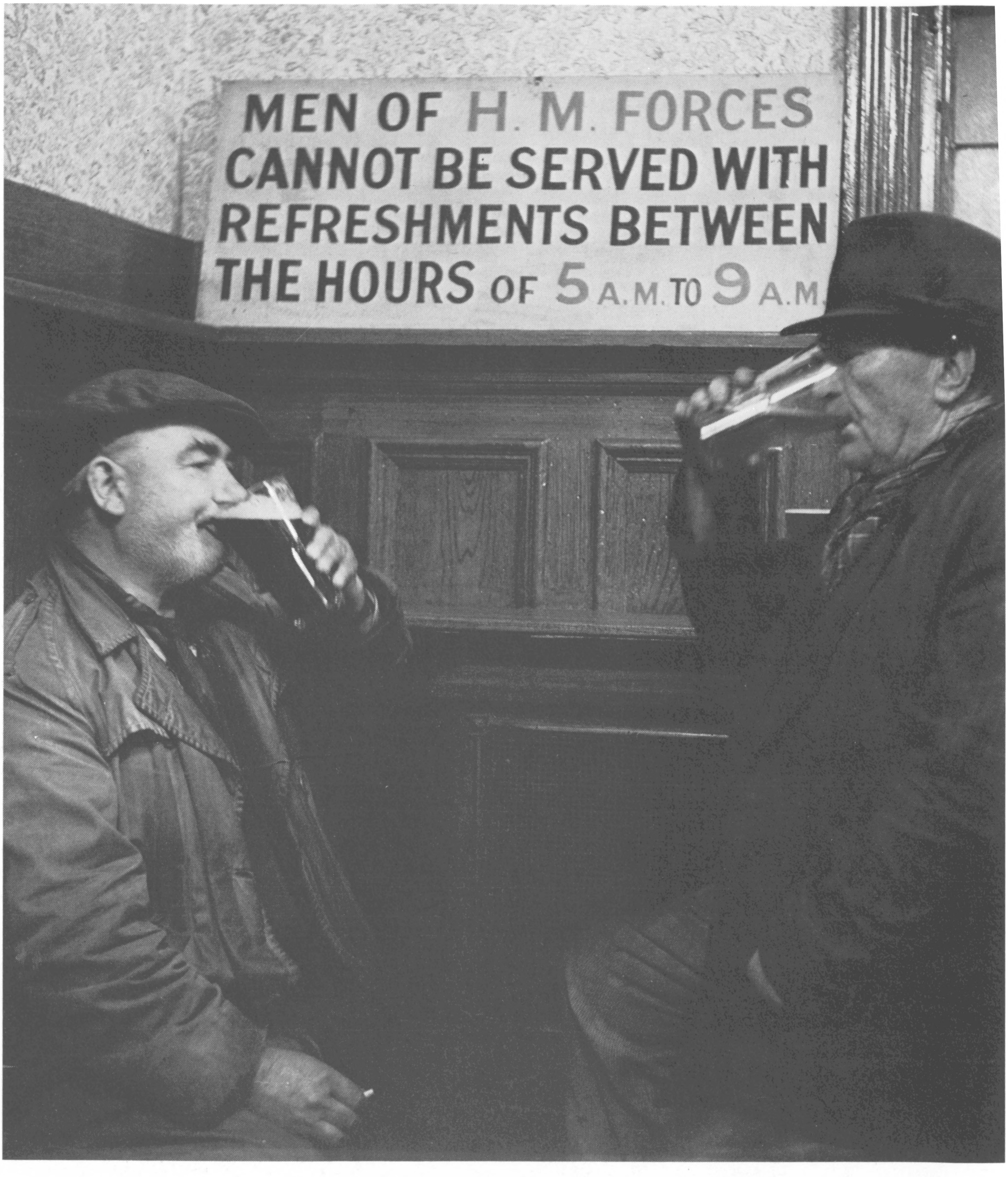
ON BAR



▲ **293**
A Lyons Corner House.

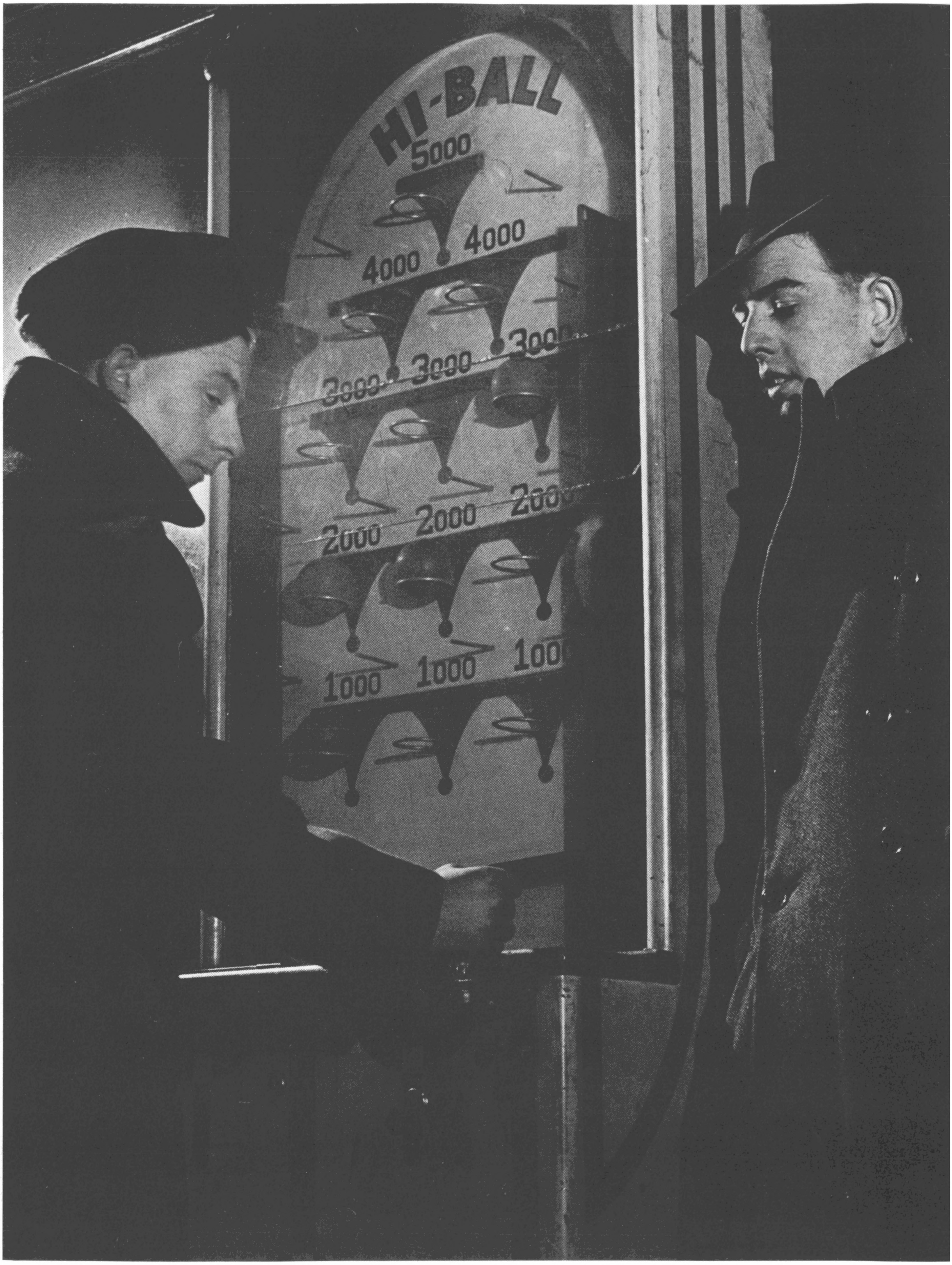
▶ **294**
Locals and visitors at the Prospect of Whitby in London's East End.

NARROW NECK
MANNS


MEN OF H. M. FORCES
CANNOT BE SERVED WITH
REFRESHMENTS BETWEEN
THE HOURS OF 5 A.M. TO 9 A.M.

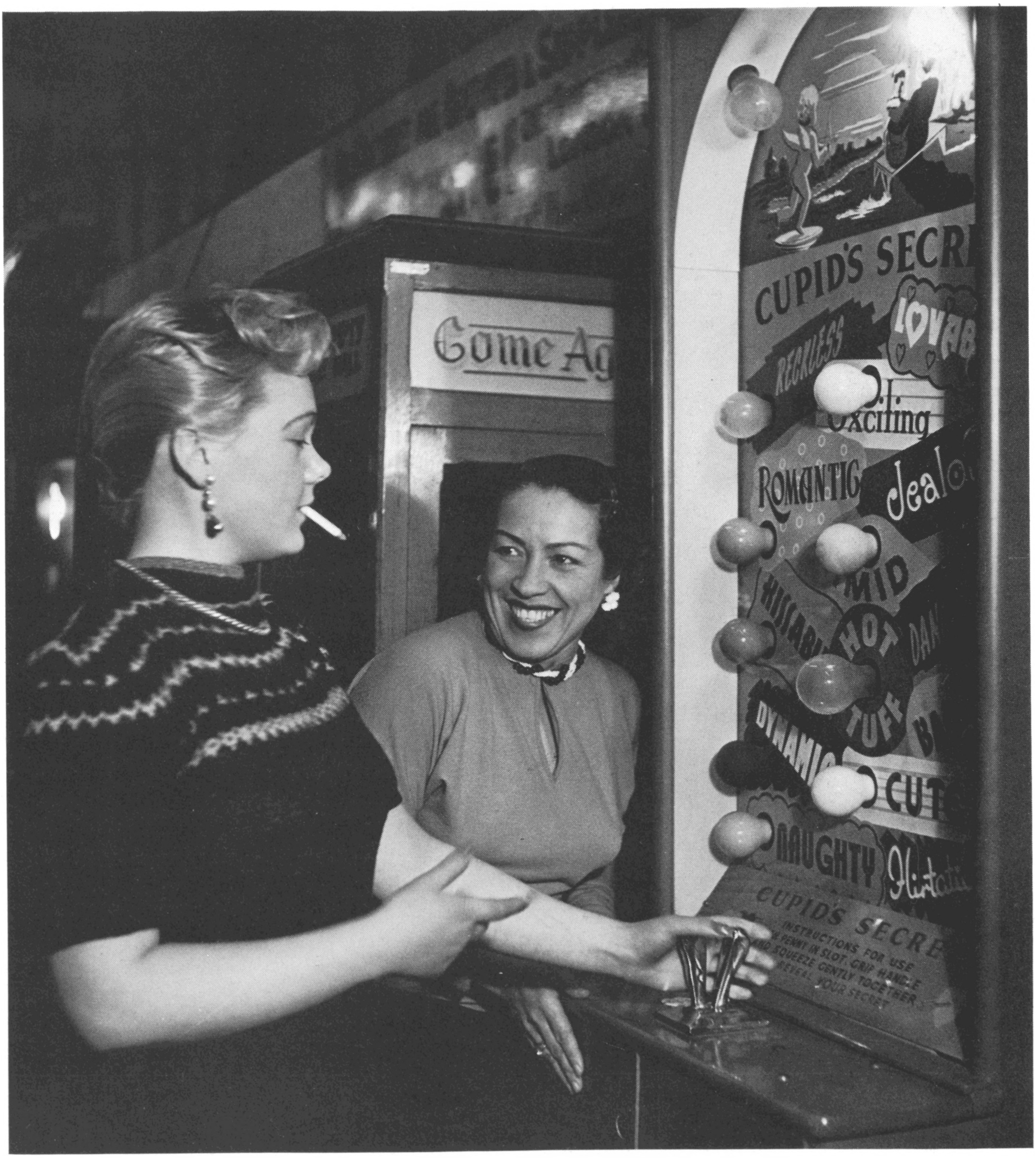
▲ **295**
Covent Garden workers were able to enjoy an early morning pint.

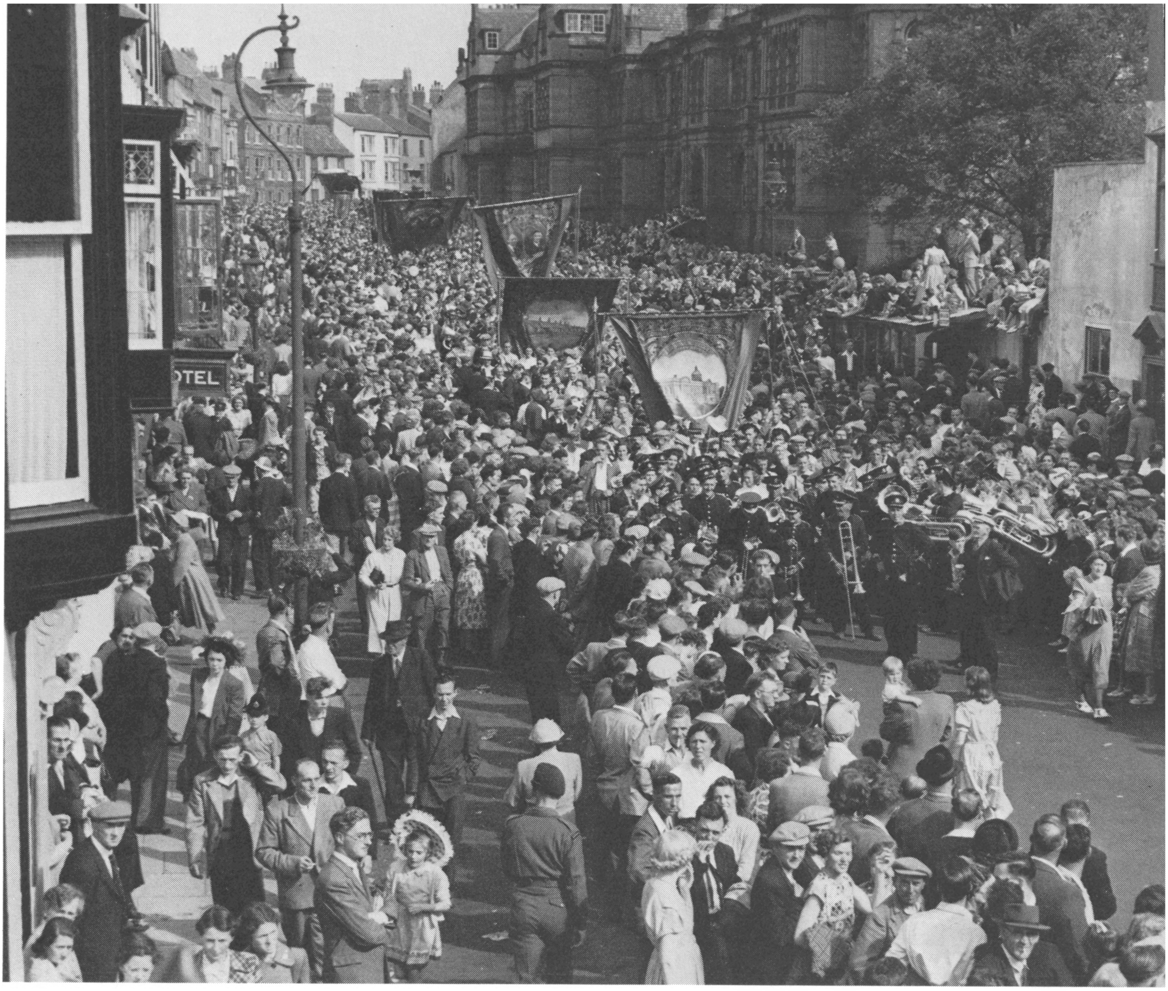
▶ **296**
The Ritz in 1950.


HI-BALL
5000
4000
4000
4000
3000
3000
3000
2000
2000
2000
1000
1000
1000

◄ **297**
The craze for pin-tables was denounced by the Press as being responsible for juvenile crime.

▼ **298**
'Cupid's Secret' – revealed for one penny in the slot.


Come Ag
CUPID'S SECR
RECKLESS
LOVAB
Exciting
ROMANTIC
Jealo
MID
KISSABL
HOT
DAR
DYNAMIC
TUFF
CUTE
NAUGHTY
Flirtati
CUPIDS SECRE
INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE
PENNY IN SLOT, GRIP HANDLE
AND SQUEEZE GENTLY TOGETHER
REVEAL YOUR SECRET



▲ **299**
In the north-east, a miners' parade was enjoyed by the whole community.

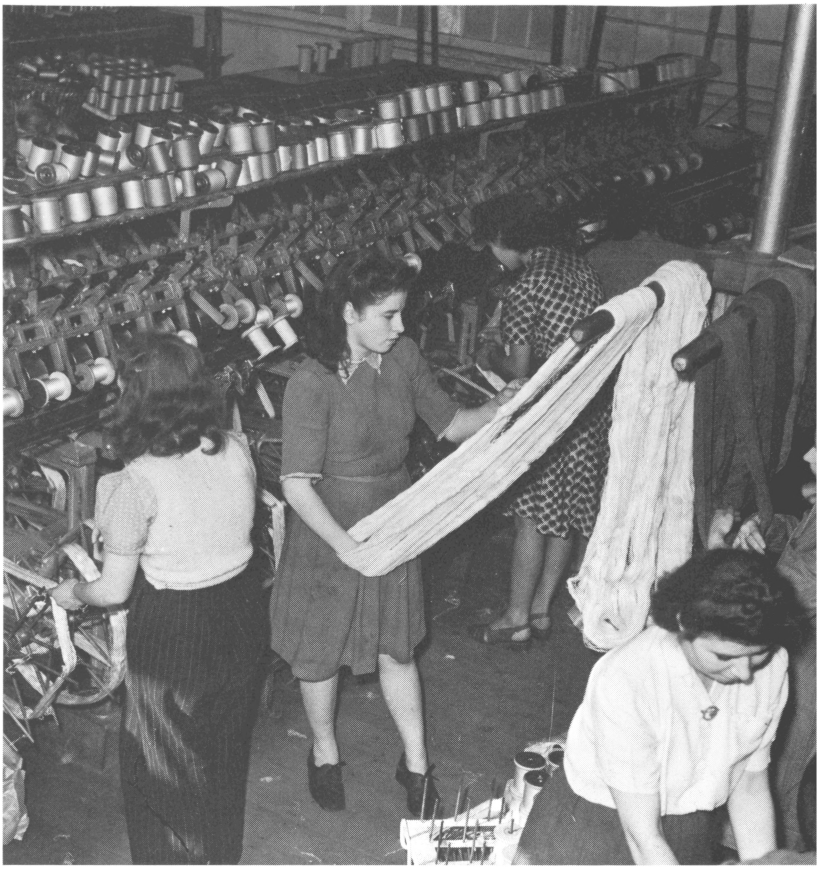
► **300**
Arsenal v. Manchester United, 1946.

DINING ROOMS
AIRIES LONDON

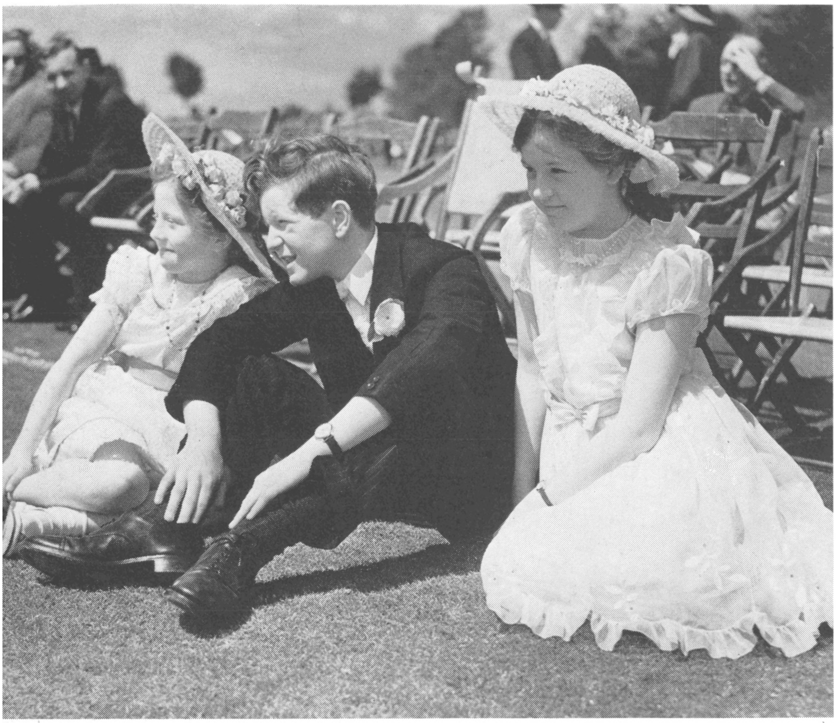
◀ **301**
Princess Elizabeth married the Duke of Edinburgh in 1947; two spectators from Clapham were determined to have a good view.

▶ **302**
The Princess was given one hundred coupons for her wedding. The silk for the wedding dress was woven at Braintree by the Royal Weavers.

▼ **303**
Another royal occasion: the Silver Wedding Anniversary of George VI and Queen Elizabeth in 1948.

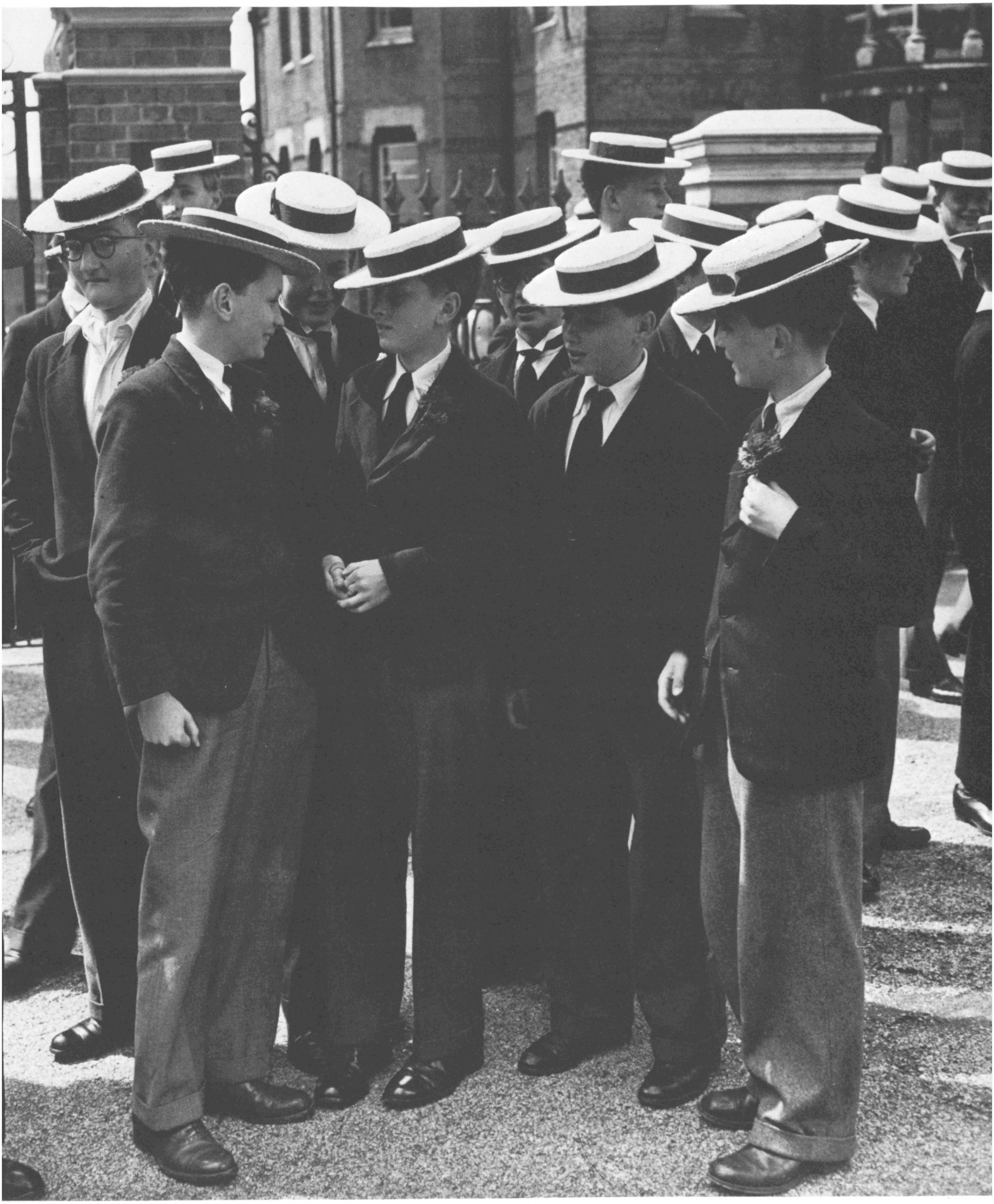


ONS 343
HIGH CLASS
Tailors & Naval Outfitters



▲ **304**
Etonian and sisters watching the Fourth of June cricket.

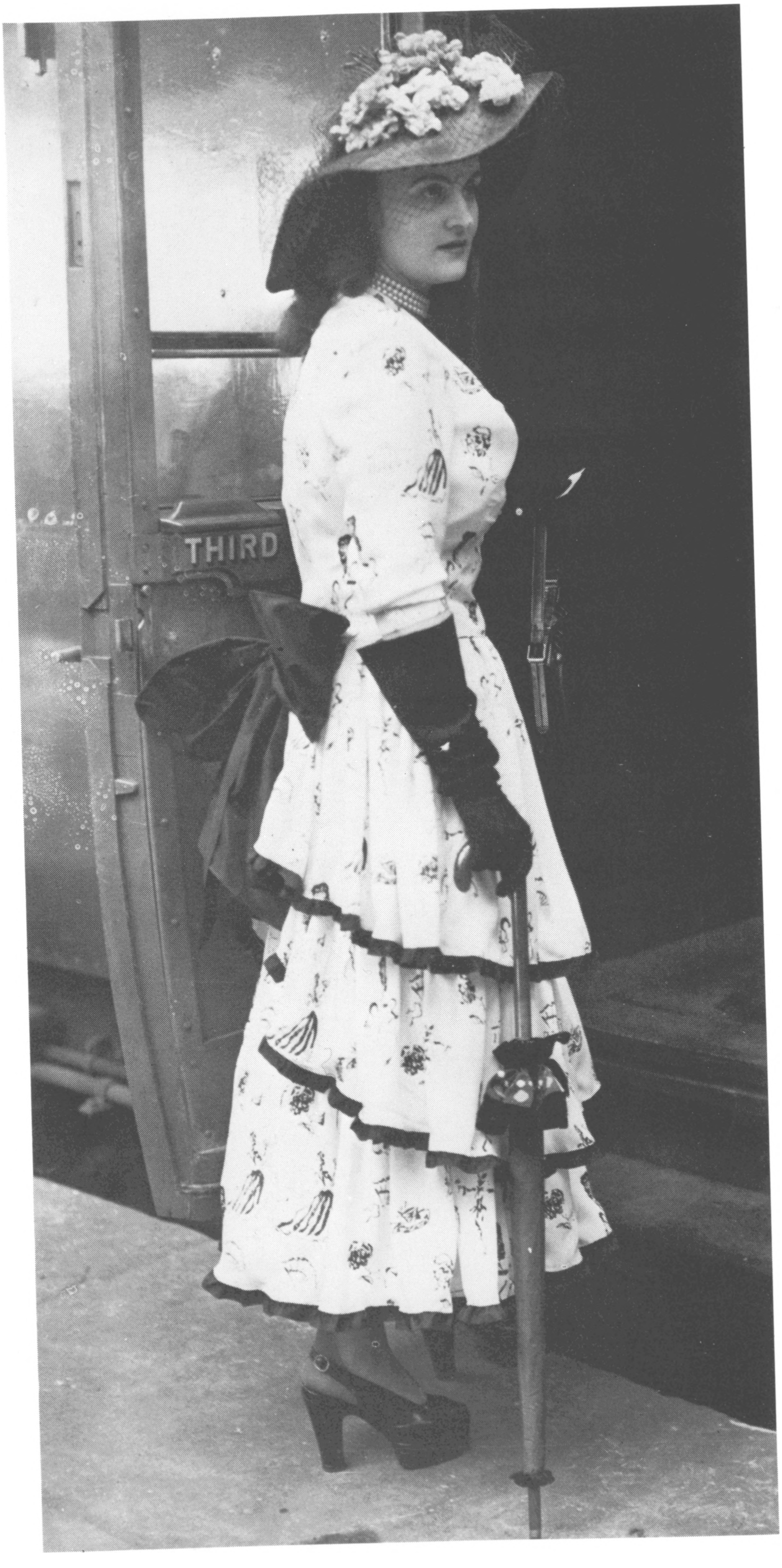
▶ **305**
Speech Day at Harrow.



◀ **306**
Debutantes at Queen Charlotte's Ball, 1952, dressed in the traditional white, with the giant birthday cake.

◀ **307**
Buckingham Palace Garden Party in 1949.

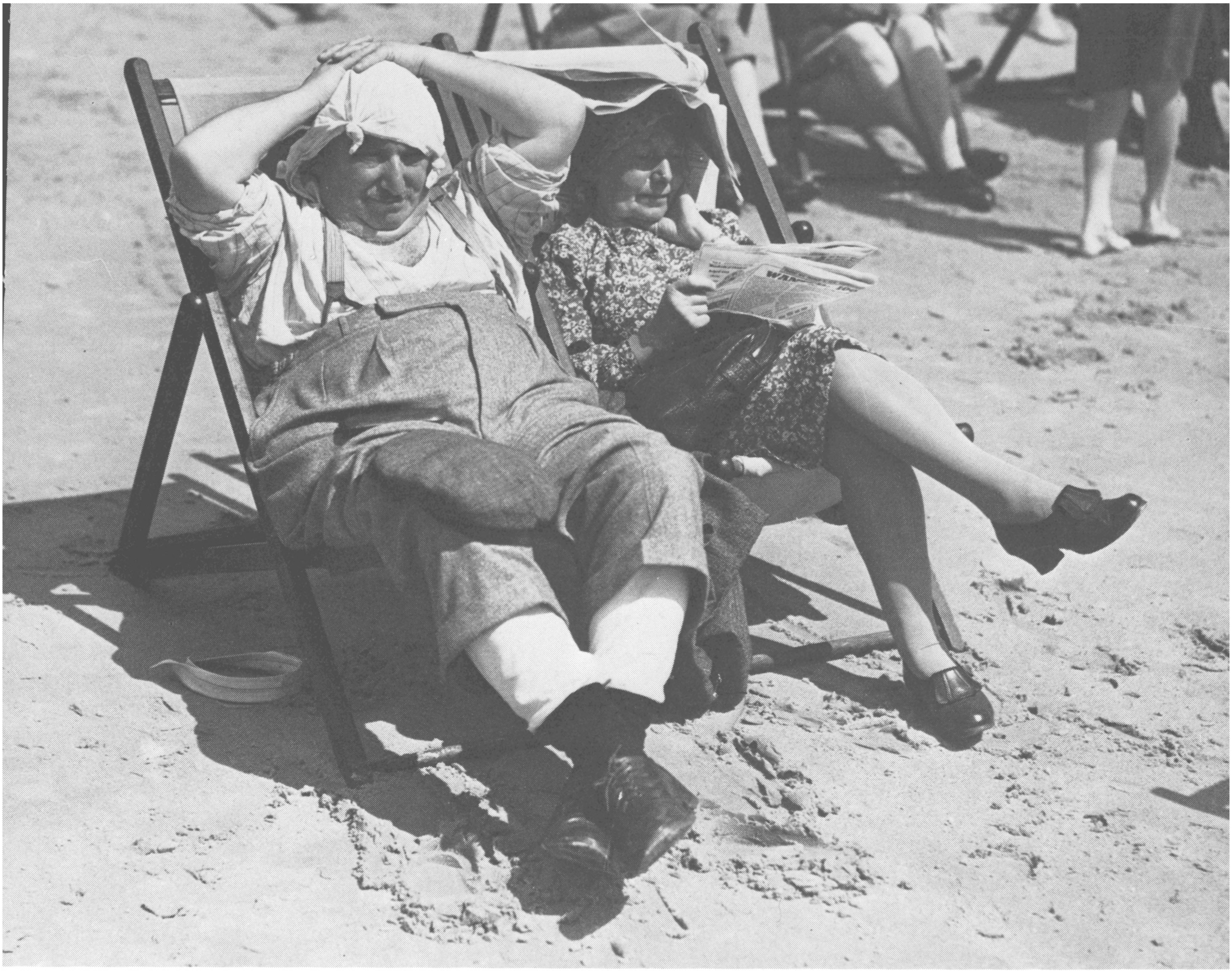
▶ **308**
Off to Ascot, 1948.



Eighty-One
MRS MOPP'S

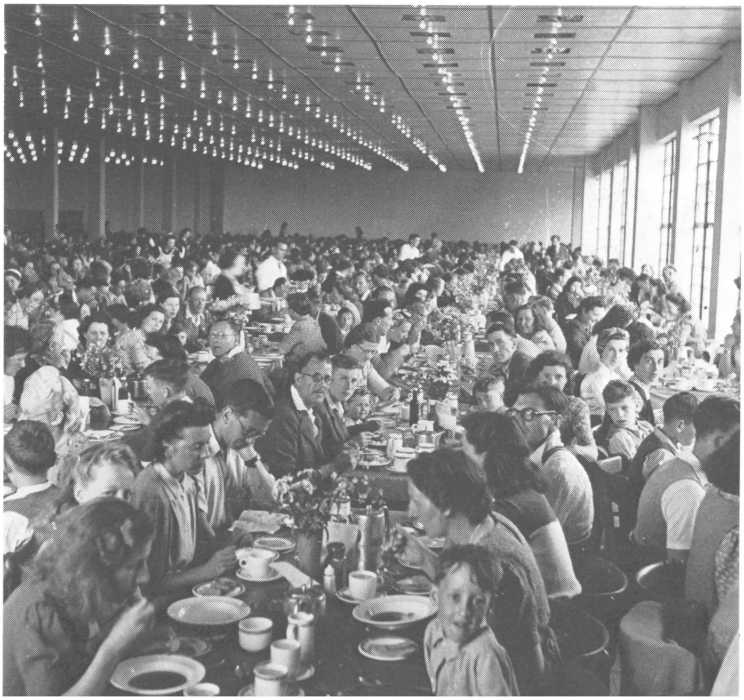
▲ **309**
Father minds baby on Brighton beach.

◀ **310**
The original Mrs Mopp, famous as the charwoman in Tommy Handley's *ITMA* radio programme, outside her seaside cafe at Deal.



▲ **311**
Bournemouth, 1946.

► **312**
A thousand holiday makers could eat simultaneously at Butlin's Holiday Camp, Clacton-on-Sea.



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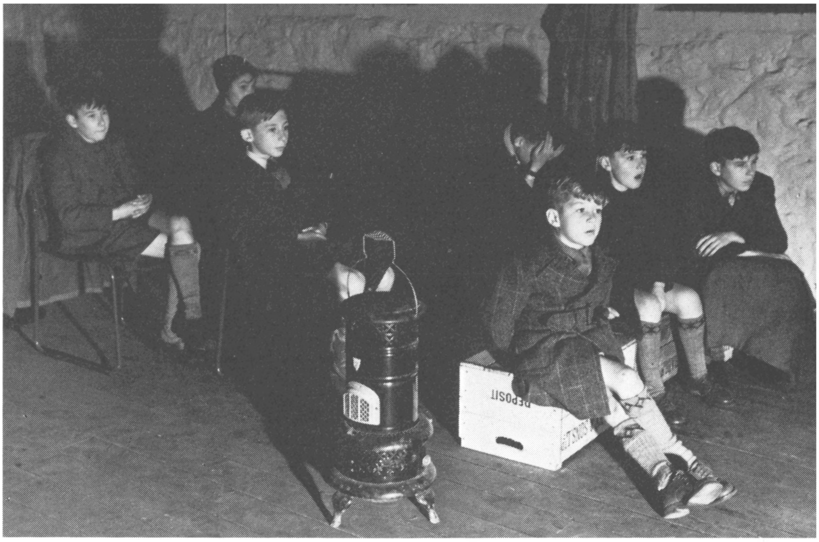
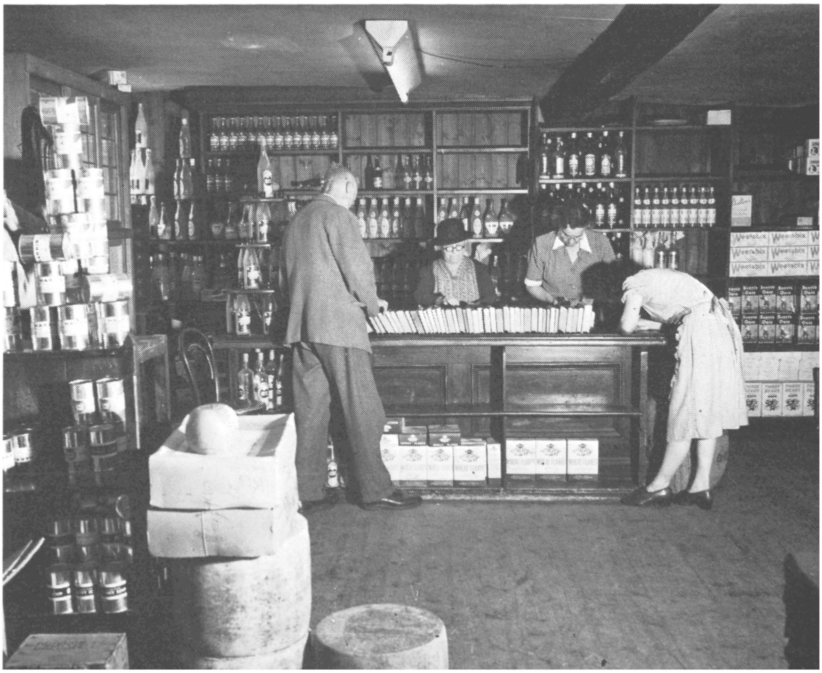
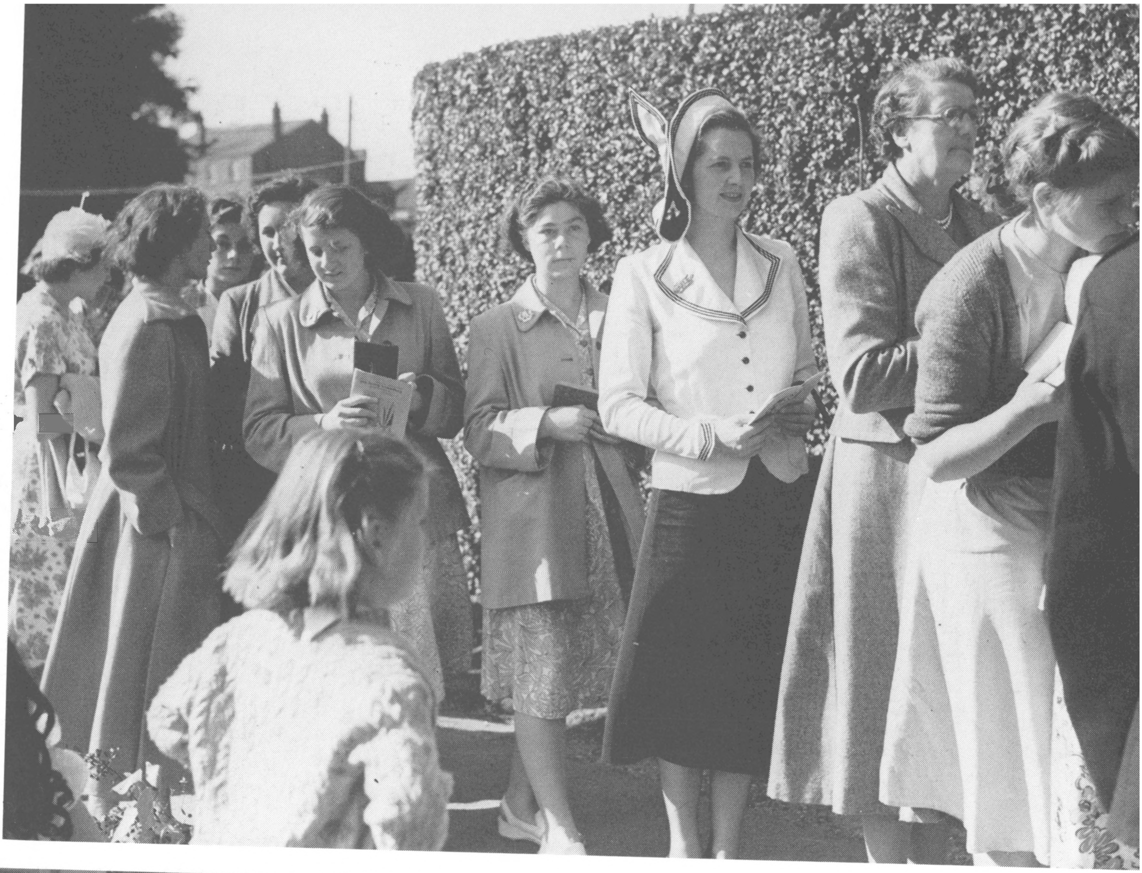


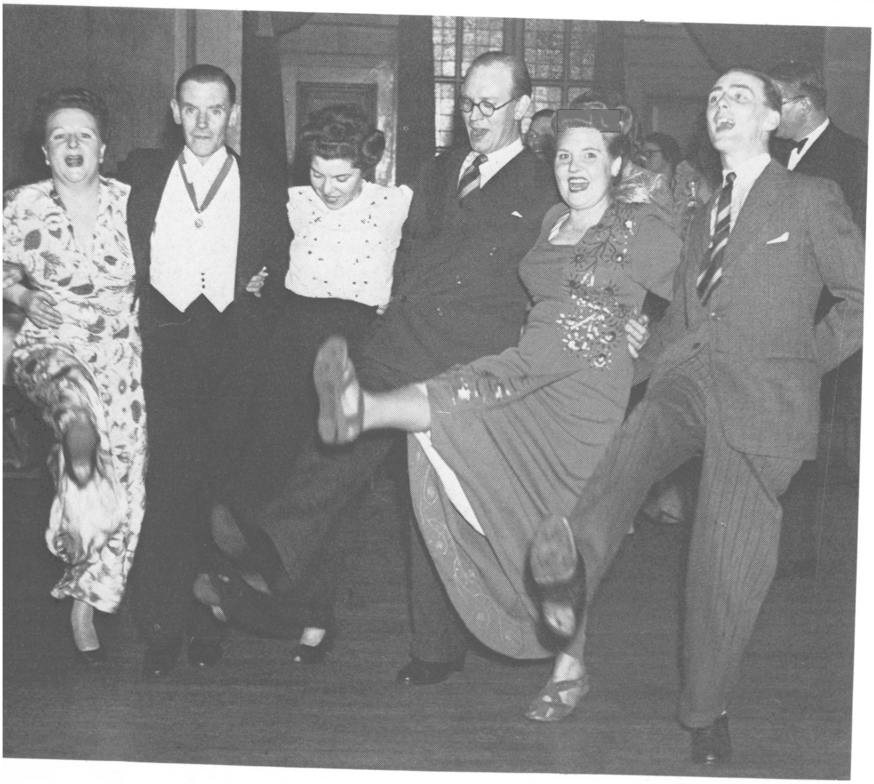
◀ **313**
A meet of the Crowhurst Otter Hounds. The Senior Master, on crutches, had held the post for 47 years. His daughter, on the right, was joint master. His wife is seen on his left.

▲ **314**
Farm workers' cinema, 1949.

▼ **315**
The County Library opened once a week at the village shop in Chilham.







▲ **316**
Fêtes were sometimes opened by celebrities. This one at Dartford was opened by actress Patricia Dainton; in the queue for her autograph was Miss Margaret Roberts, now Mrs Margaret Thatcher.

◀ **317**
The Hokey Cokey at the Nuffield Centre in London.

▲ **318**
Windmill Girls in 1946.

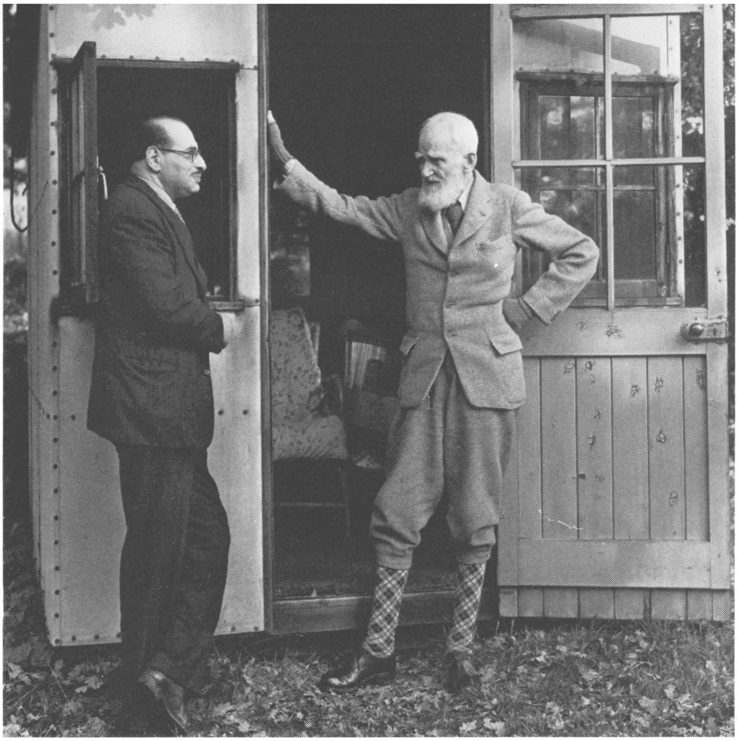
► **319**
Cecil Beaton as theatrical designer in 1950.

▼ **320**
Cards, beer and cigarettes, 1946.

▶ **321**
George Bernard Shaw outside his summer house at Ayot St Lawrence.

STOUT
STOUT

▶ **322**
Richmal Crompton, author of the Just William series, at home with her book and wireless in 1947.

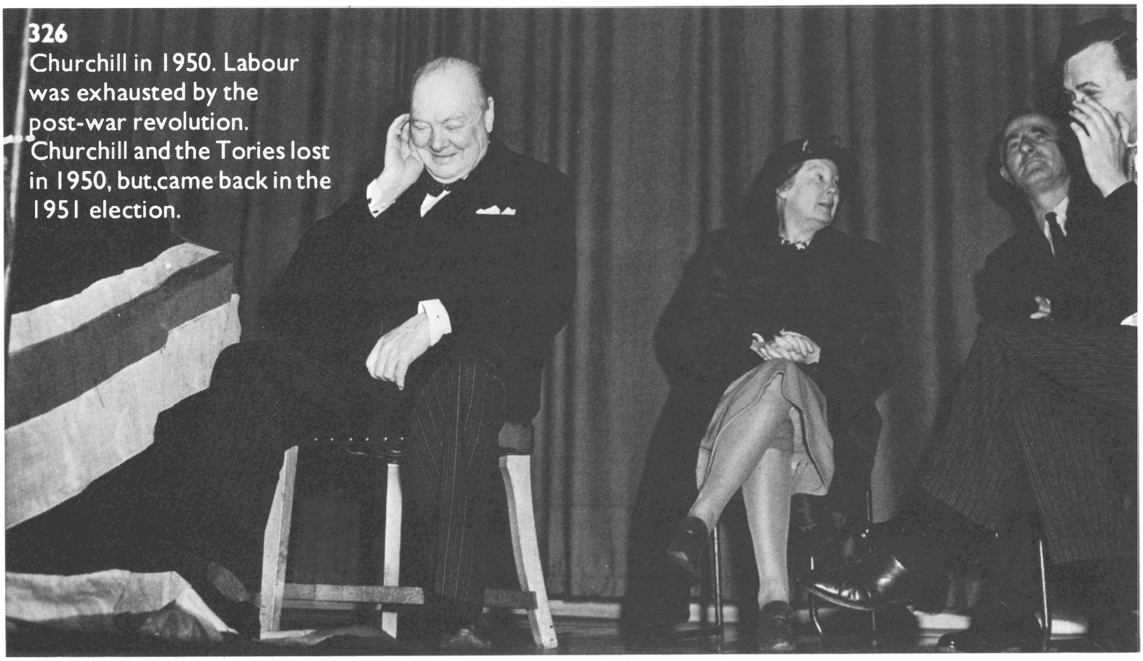


◀ **323**
The foreign allowance was pathetically meagre, but some people had friends abroad who gave them hospitality. The lucky few could get away for a holiday abroad on the *Queen Elizabeth* or the *Queen Mary*, which still ploughed their stately way across the Atlantic.

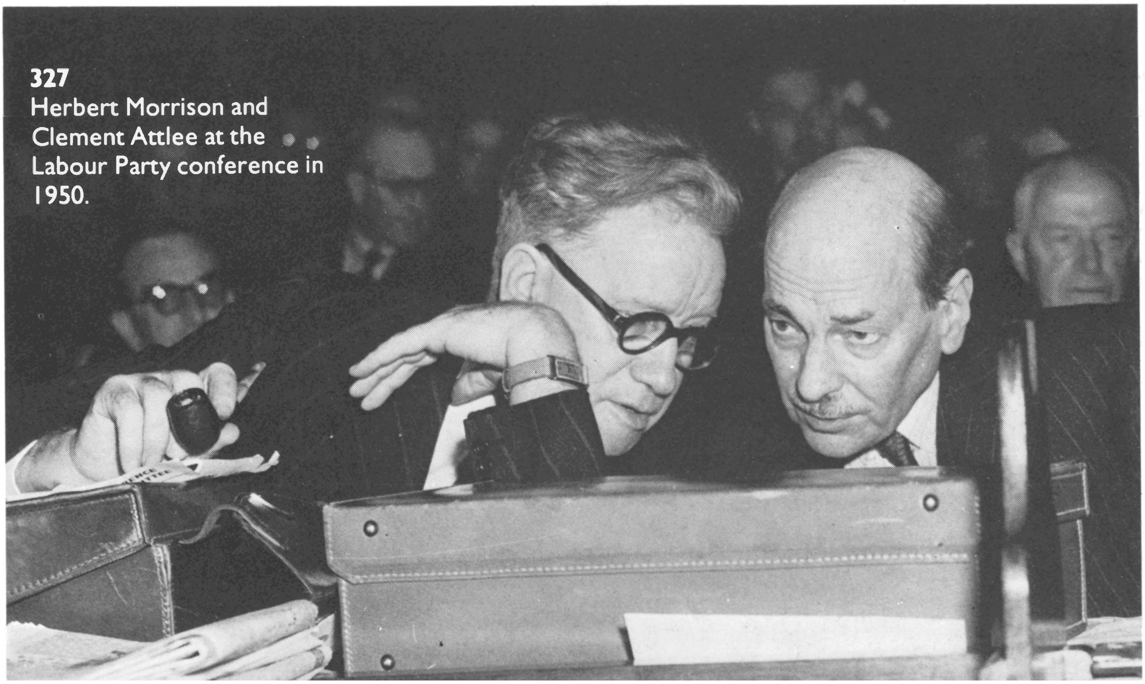
▼ **324**
Dressing for dinner aboard the *Queen Elizabeth*, 1946.

◀ **325**
John Logie Baird, seen here in the forties, had invented television in the twenties but the war stopped television broadcasting for seven years. The service re-opened on 7 June 1946. London's Victory Parade was televised, Philip Harben demonstrated cookery and Miss Jasmine Bligh came back as an announcer. Most screens were only seven inches wide. In 1947 there were less than 14,000 licence holders; by 1951 there were nearly 800,000.

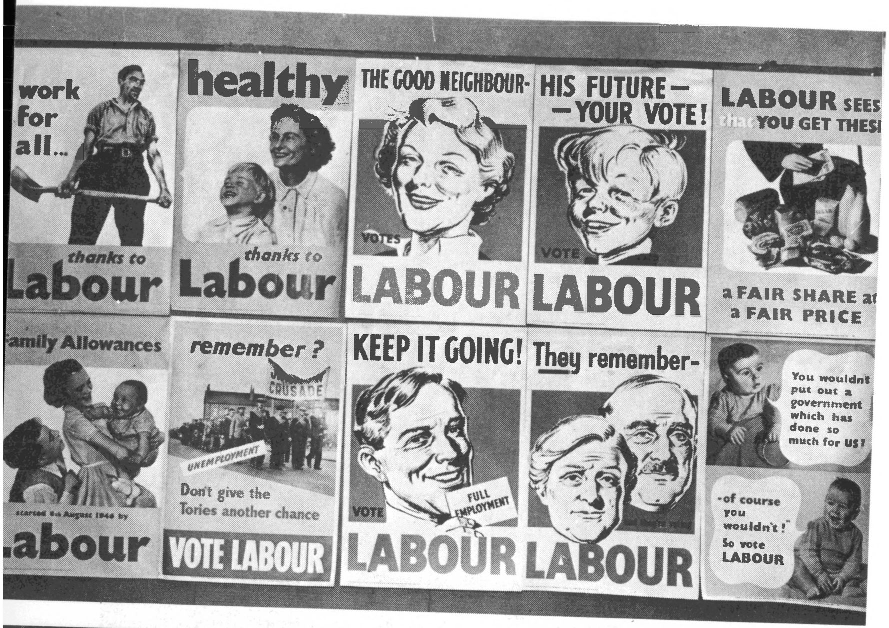
THE NEW BRITAIN



326
Churchill in 1950. Labour was exhausted by the post-war revolution. Churchill and the Tories lost in 1950, but came back in the 1951 election.



327
Herbert Morrison and Clement Attlee at the Labour Party conference in 1950.

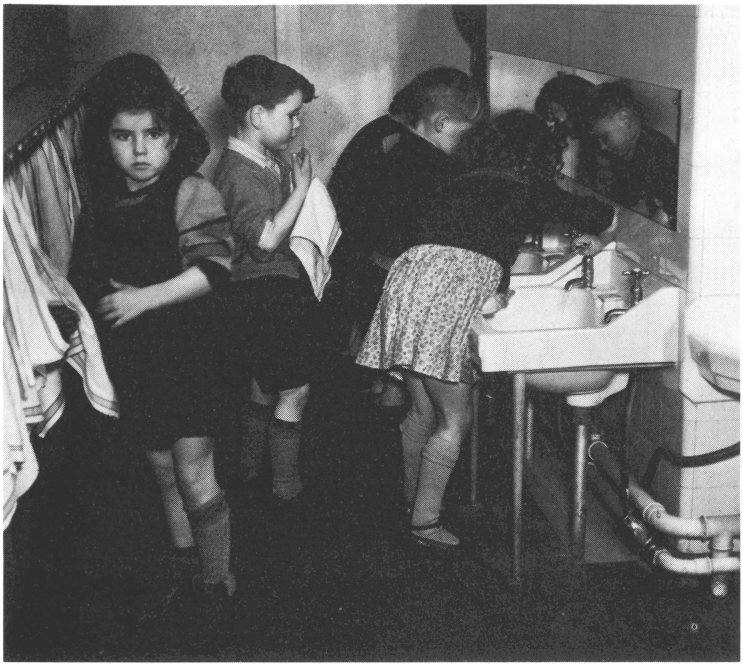

work for all...
thanks to
Labour
healthy
thanks to
Labour
THE GOOD NEIGHBOUR-
VOTES
LABOUR
HIS FUTURE—
—YOUR VOTE!
VOTE
LABOUR
LABOUR SEES
YOU GET THESE
a FAIR SHARE at a FAIR PRICE
Family Allowances
started 6th August 1946 by
Labour
remember?
CRUSADE
UNEMPLOYMENT
Don't give the Tories another chance
VOTE LABOUR
KEEP IT GOING!
FULL EMPLOYMENT
VOTE
LABOUR
They remember-
LABOUR
You wouldn't put out a government which has done so much for US!
-of course you wouldn't!
So vote LABOUR

◀ **328**
The Welfare State was the theme of Labour's electoral campaign in that year.

▼ **329**
Rest time at a Woolwich nursery school in 1947.

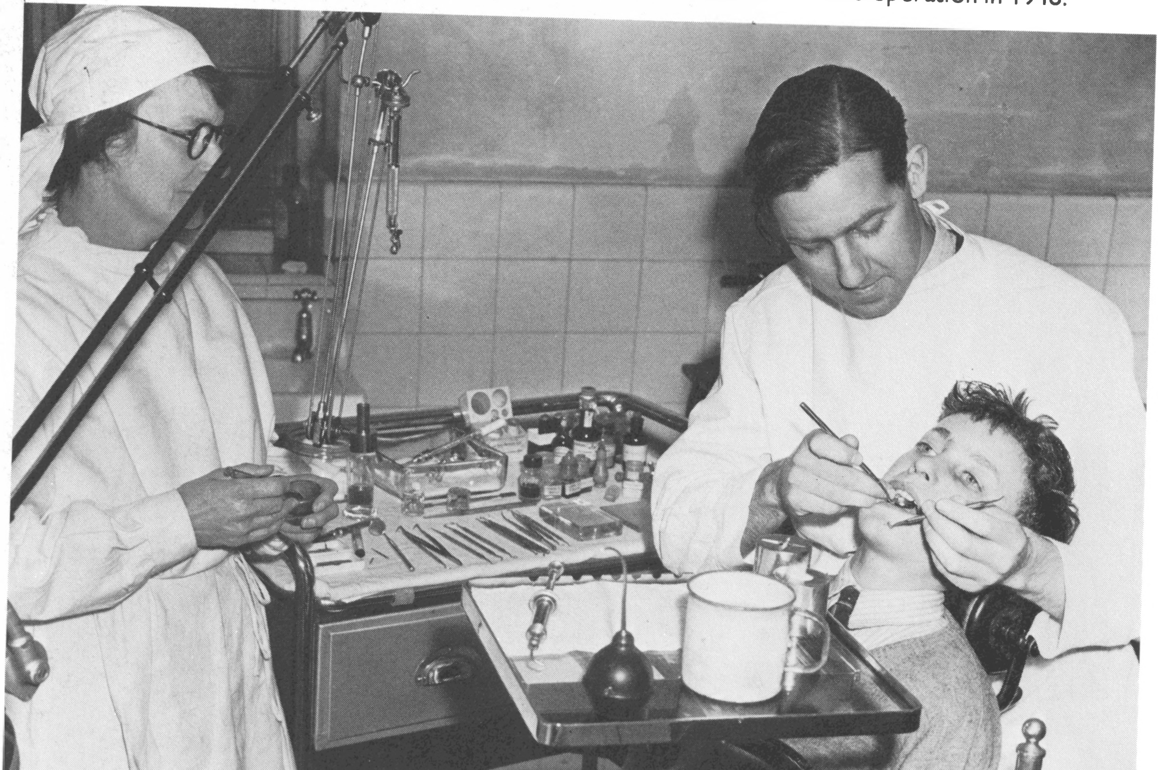
SAXA
THE BEST PACKET

▶ **330**
The washroom of a primary school in London's Woolwich, 1951, complete with hot and cold running water, soap and towels.



▼ **331**
School milk and school meals were provided from 1947.

332
Bevan's National Health Scheme was authorized by a bill which became law on 6 November 1946 and came into operation in 1948.



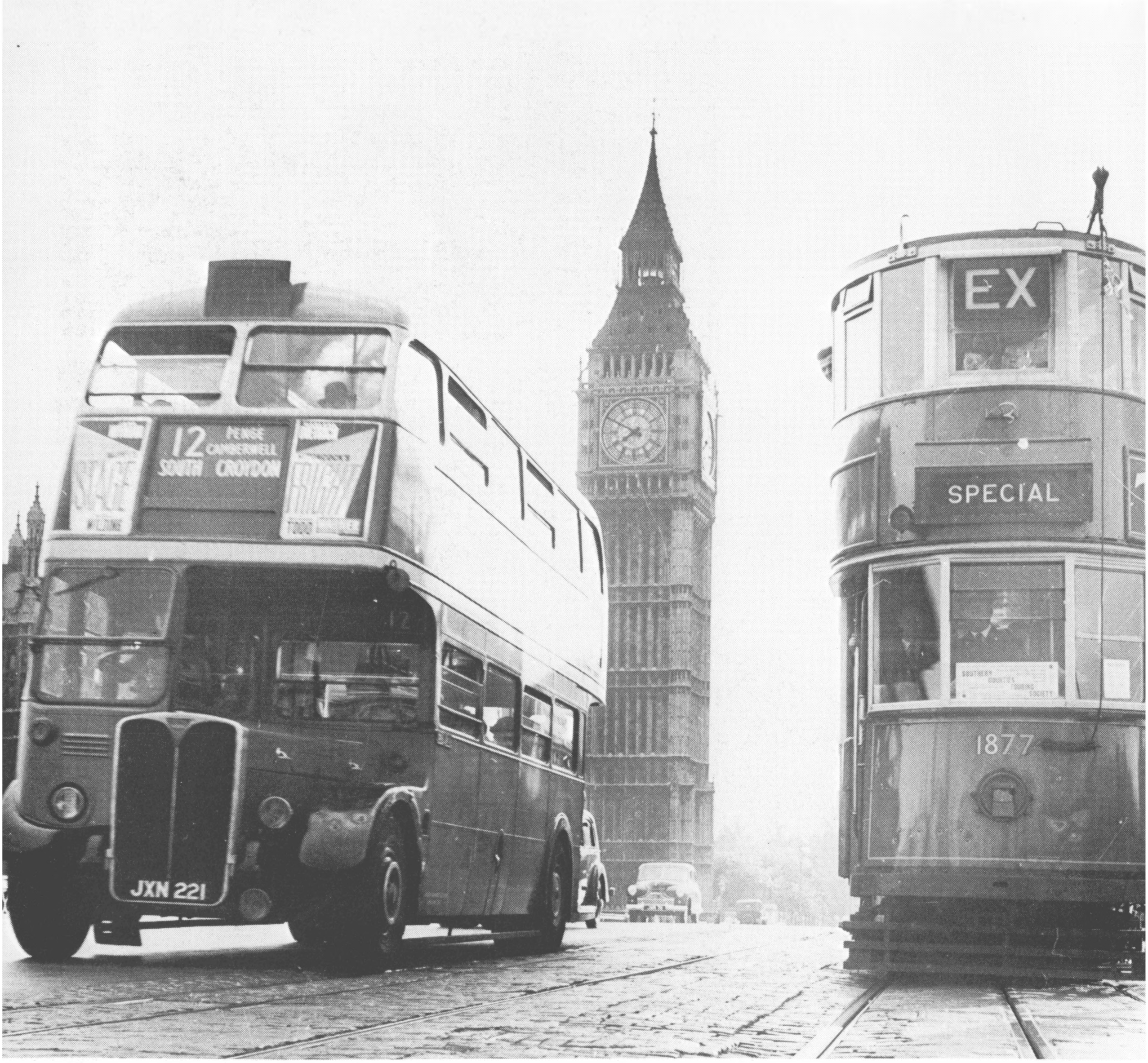
▶ 333
Fireside and television, 1950.

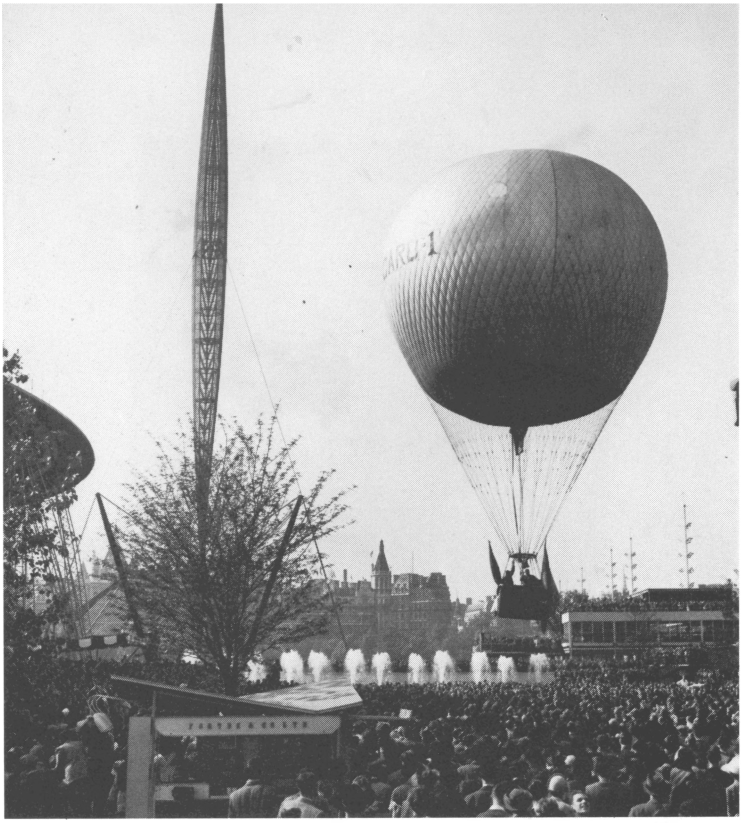
▶ 334
'End Your Washday Drudgery' – one of the first launderettes.

LAUNDERETTE
SELF SERVICE
BENDIX
HOME LAUNDRIES

▶ 335
This self-service store still possessed brass scales for weighing purchases in 1949.

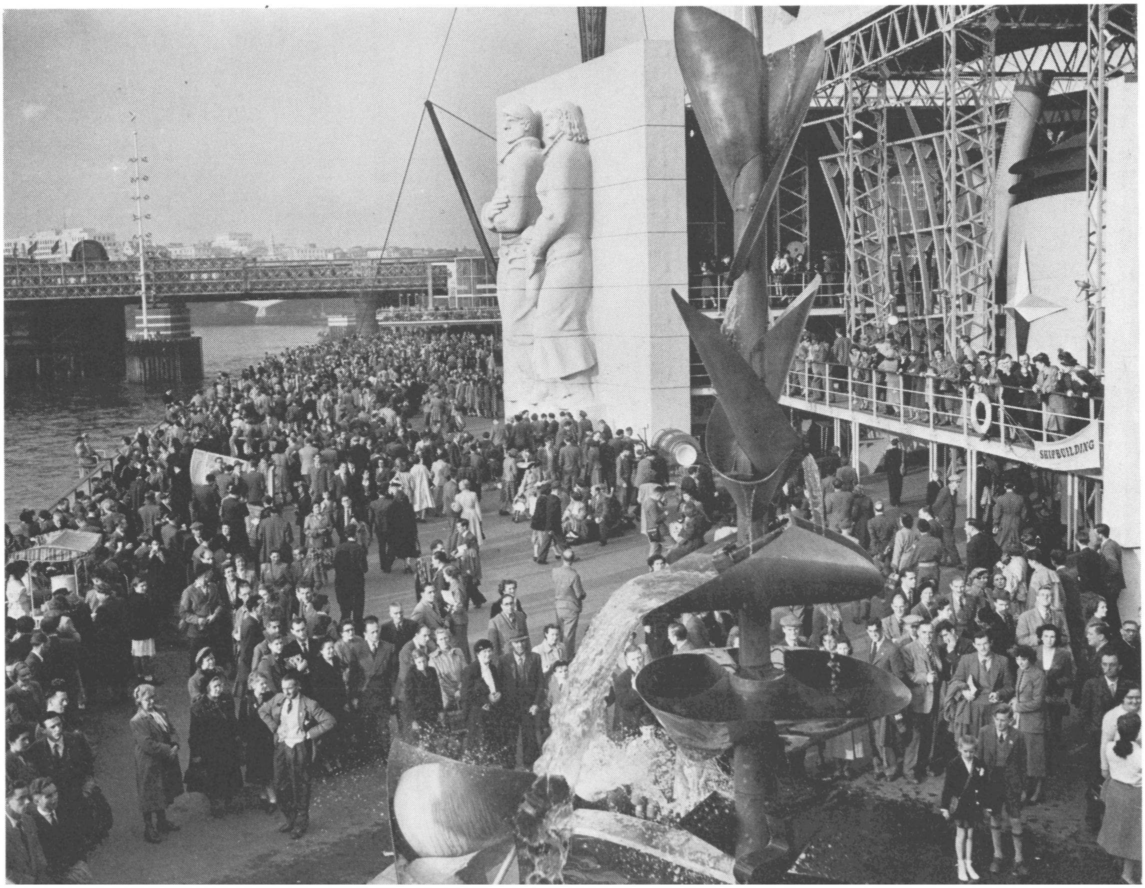
336
Trams finally disappeared from London on 5 July 1952. (The last to run was number 1951 on route 40.)

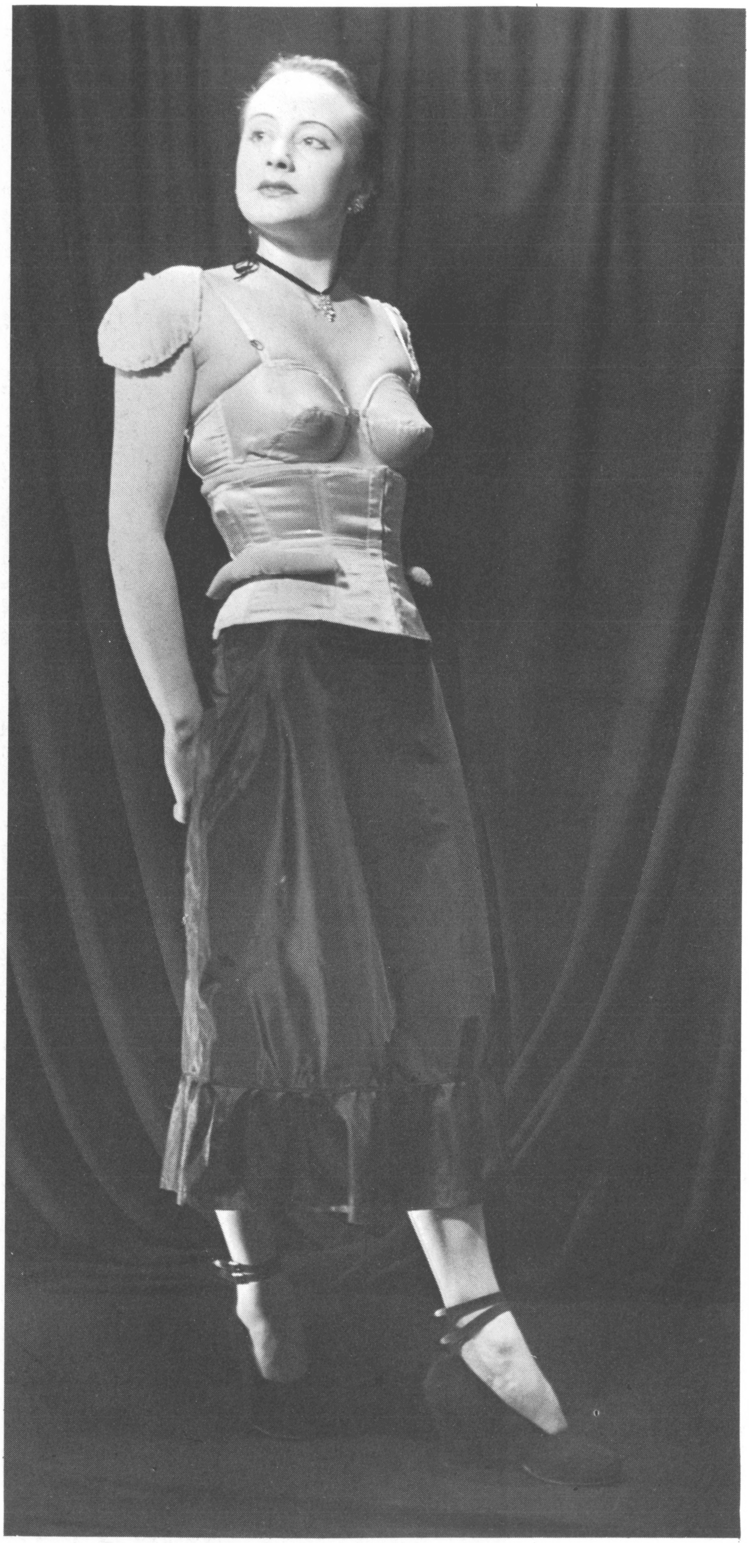

12 PENGE CAMBERWELL SOUTH CROYDON
12
JXN 221
EX
SPECIAL
SOUTHERN COUNTIES TOURING SOCIETY
1877



▶ **337**
The balloon went up at the Festival of Britain, 1951, from the River Walk, beside Powell and Moya's spectacular Skylon.

▼ **338**
The Festival in full swing.

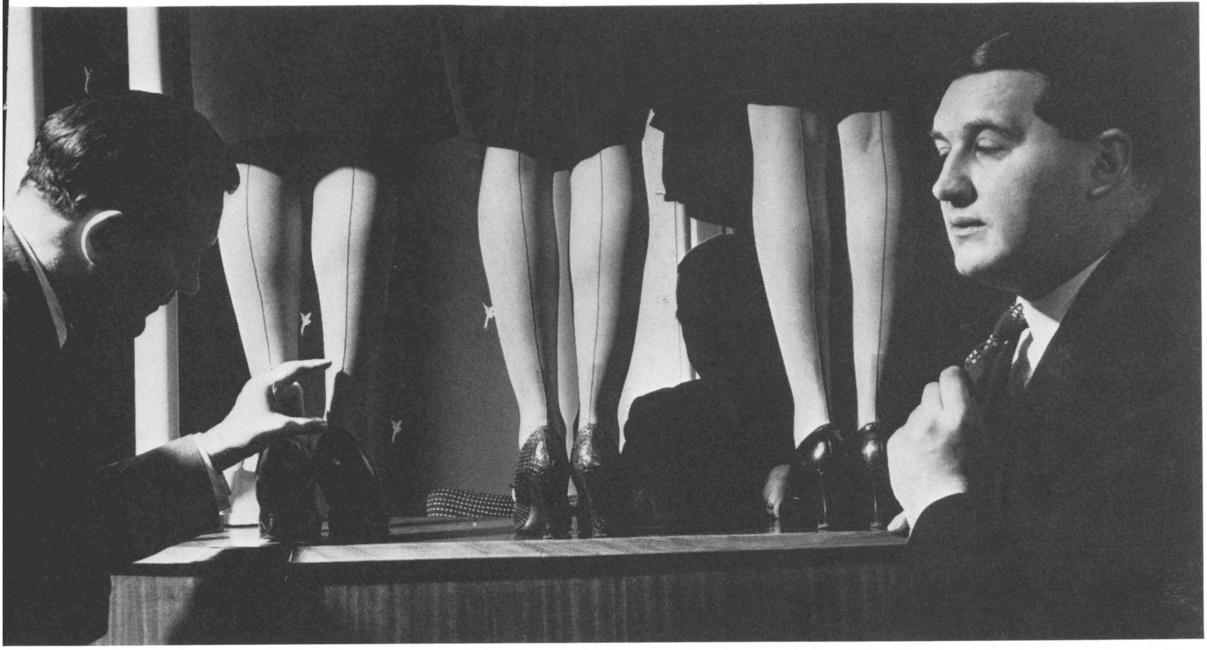


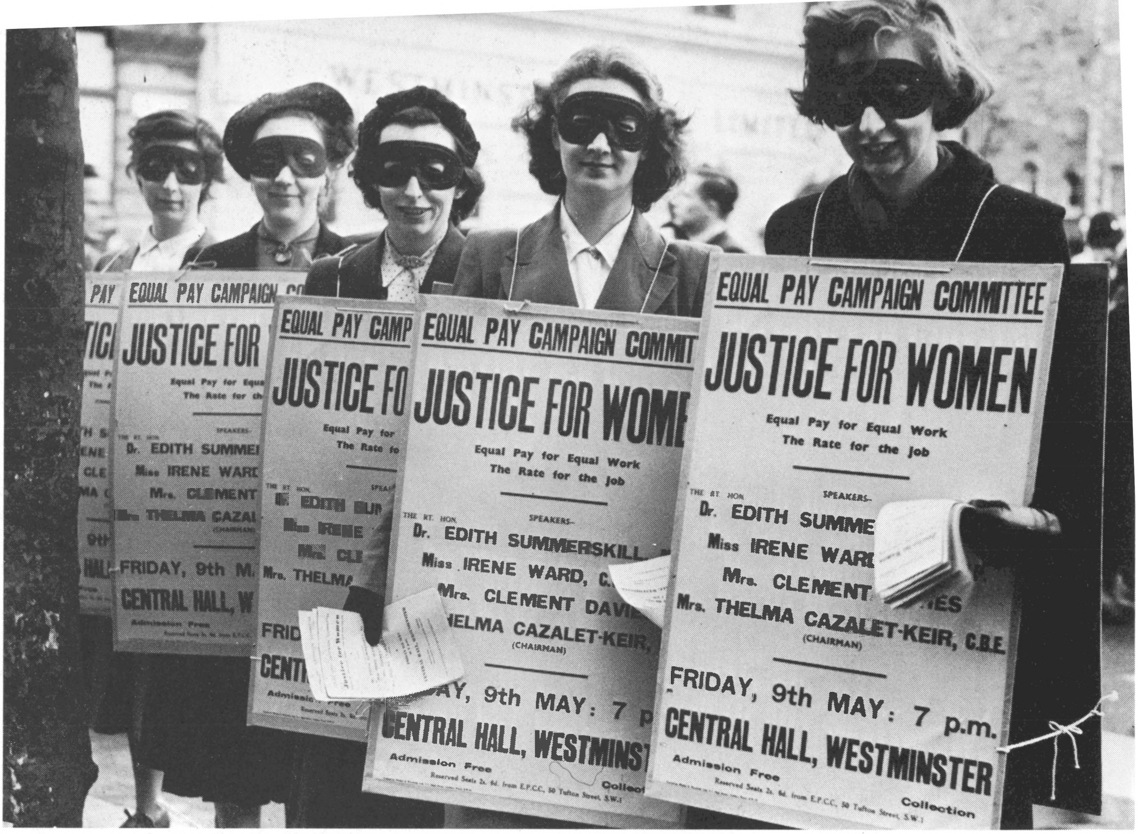


◀ **339**
Foundation for the New Look, 1948. Pads on shoulders and hips emphasized a tiny waist.

▶ **340**
Selecting a girl to model 15-denier nylons in 1953.

▶ **341**
A Soho nightclub, The Pigalle, in 1950.




EQUAL PAY CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE
JUSTICE FOR WOMEN
Equal Pay for Equal Work
The Rate for the Job
SPEAKERS–
THE RT. HON.
Dr. EDITH SUMMERSKILL
Miss IRENE WARD
Mrs. CLEMENT DAVIES
Mrs. THELMA CAZALET-KEIR, C.B.E.
(CHAIRMAN)
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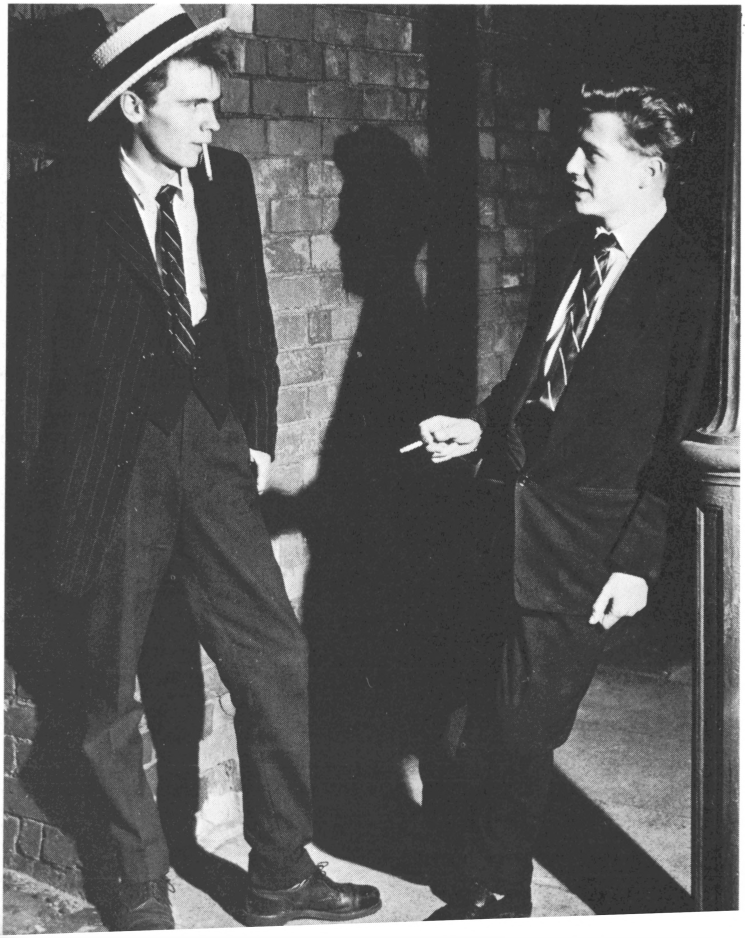
CENTRAL HALL, WESTMINSTER
Admission Free
Collection
Justice for Women



▲ 342
Women campaigned to share in the growing affluence in 1952.

◀ 343
Teddy boys.

▲ **344**
Prince Charles and his entourage in 1949.

▶ **345**
George VI died in 1952. People all over the country kept a two-minute silence on the day of the funeral.

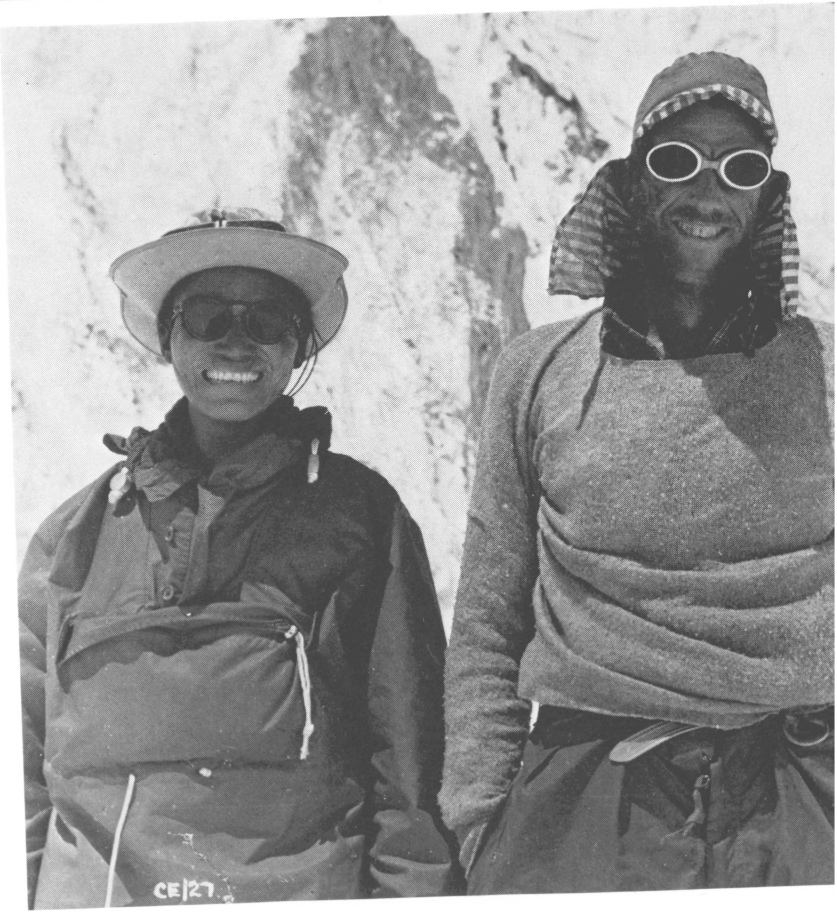
STRAIGHT ON
TO THE SEA
& HOLIDAY BUREA
BUS STOP
55

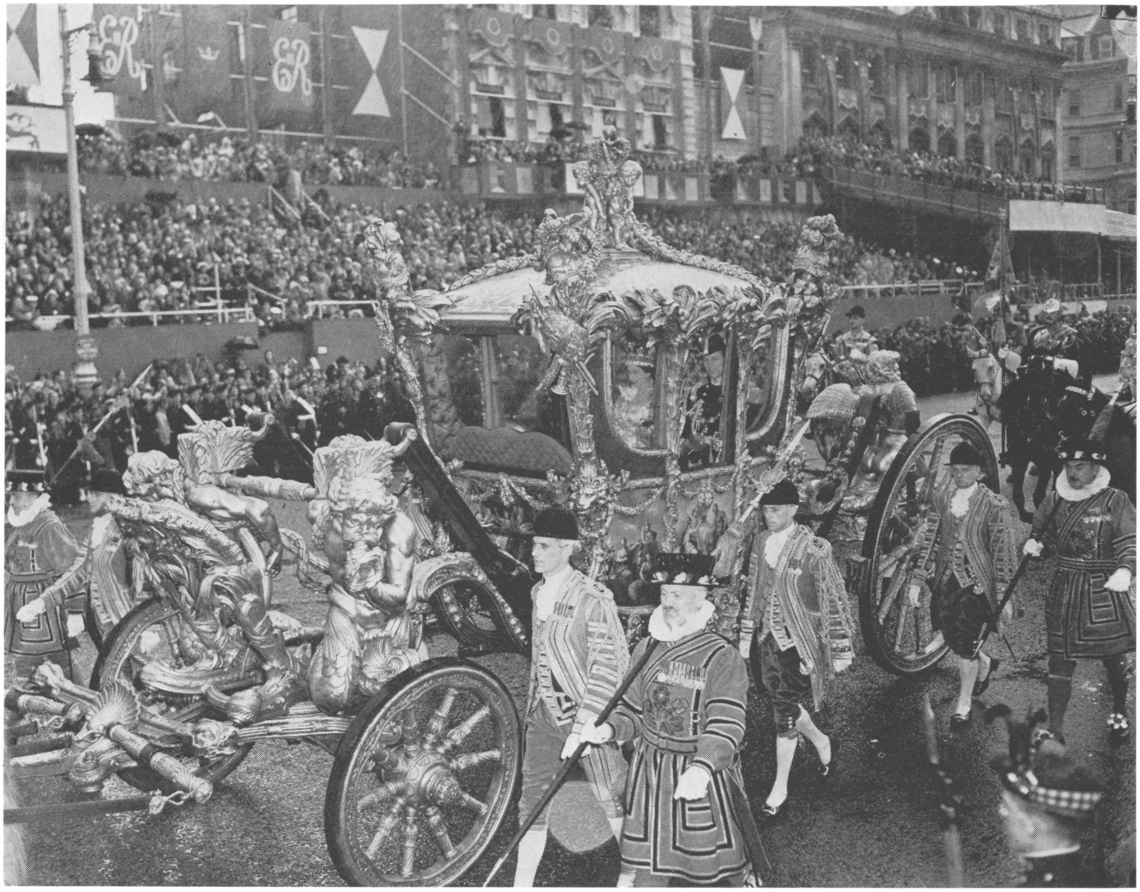
346
Coronation year, 1953, started badly with disastrous floods.

◀ **347**
Cleaning up Lord Nelson in readiness for the Coronation celebrations.

▶ 348
Coronation Day, 2 June 1953.

▶ 349
The news that Hillary and Tensing had been the first to reach the summit of Mount Everest reached England on Coronation morning.





350
The Queen and Prince Philip returning from Westminster Abbey. The heavy rain failed to dampen the enthusiasm of New Elizabethans.

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‘a magnificent collection of over three hundred and fifty photographs … pictures that are sad, funny and full of surprises.’ *The Lady*

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J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd
33 Welbeck Street, London WIM 8LX
© *1980, Cover design: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd*
0 460 02230 x

GB £ NET +007.95
ISBN 0-460-02230-X
00795
9 780460 022309